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# The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism during the Mid-Tang Period

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in East Asian Languages and Cultures

by

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## *Abbreviations*

The following abbreviations are used in the notes and the bibliography.

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| BGL | *Baizhang guanglu* 百丈廣錄. |
| BLZ | *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳. |
| CDL | *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈祿. |
| IBK | *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究. |
| JTS | *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書. |
| K | *Koryŏ taejanggyŏng* 高麗大藏經. |
| KDBR | *Komazawa daigaku bukkyōgakubu ronshū* 駒澤大學佛教學部論集. |
| MY | *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄. |
| QTW | *Quan Tangwen* 全唐文. |
| SBBY | *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要. |
| SBCK | *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊. |
| SGSZ | *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳. |
| SK | [*Komazawa daigaku*] *Shūgaku kenkyū* [駒澤大學] 宗學研究. |
| SKQS | *Suku quanshu* 四庫全書. |
| T | *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. |
| TG | *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報. |
| TGDL | *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄. |
| WYYH | *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華. |
| XTS | *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書. |
| XZJ | *Xu zangjing* 續藏經 (reprint of *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經). |
| ZBKK | *Zen bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 禪文化研究所紀要. |
| ZG | *Zen no goroku* 禪の語錄. |
| ZJL | *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄. |
| ZK | *Zengaku kenkyū* 禪學研究. |
| ZTJ | *Zutang ji* 祖堂集. |

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## PUBLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism

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This study focuses on the formation of the Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism, which dominated the Chan movement during the middle part of the Tang dynasty (618–907). I examine the historical context of the initial establishment of the Hongzhou School in the South in the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion (755–763), its quick spread throughout most of the Tang empire during the following few decades, and its eventual emergence as the main tradition of Chan. In addition, I also explore the development of the Hongzhou School's doctrines, literary styles, modes of instruction, religious doctrines and practices, and attitudes towards monastic institutions. The dissertation refutes the widely-accepted view of the Hongzhou School as an iconoclastic tradition that represented a radically new departure from the beliefs and practices of earlier Chinese Buddhism. Instead, it argues that, in order to obtain a balanced understanding of the Hongzhou School's development

and its significance in the history of Chinese Buddhism, we must carefully discern the subtle interplay between patterns of continuity and rupture with the previous Buddhist traditions that characterized its emergence as a distinct religious tradition.

In Part One (Chapters One and Two), I start with a critical analysis of the relevant Chan literature, which examines the literary structure, contents, and origins of those Chan texts that are pertinent to the study of the Hongzhou School. In Part Two, which constitutes a study of the Hongzhou School's early history, I start with a comprehensive biography of its illustrious founder Mazu Daoyi (709–788) (Chapters Three and Four). That is followed by a broad survey of the Hongzhou School's spread from its base in Jiangxi throughout the southern provinces (Chapter Five), and eventually throughout most other parts of the Tang empire, including the two capitals (Chapter Six). In Part Three, I examine the Hongzhou School's religious doctrines and practices in relation to the broader contexts in which they were developed and enacted. The first part of this section deals with the main doctrinal tenets and methods of spiritual practice taught by Mazu, Baizhang, and other noted Chan teachers (Chapters Seven and Eight); the second part is primarily concerned with delineating the monastic context in which Hongzhou School's soteriological paradigms were actually instituted and disseminated (Chapters Nine and Ten).

## *Introduction*

According to both traditional Buddhist and modern scholarly historiography, during China's Tang 唐 dynasty (618–907), one of the main events in the religious sphere was the emergence of Chan as a major school of Chinese Buddhism. Chan's development into a distinct religious tradition was an integral part of a larger transformation of Chinese Buddhism, usually described as a gradual process of Sinification of Buddhist beliefs, doctrines, and practices.[1] The present study is concerned with one of the main phases in Chan's evolution as a major school of Sinic Buddhism. It focuses on the formation of the Hongzhou School 洪州宗 of Chan, led by the renowned Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788), which dominated the Chan movement for close to a century, from the aftermath of the An Lushan 安祿山 (d. 757) rebellion until the years after the end of the Huichang 會昌 era (841–845) persecution of Buddhism (roughly 765–850).

It was mostly because of the impact of Mazu and his numerous capable disciples that the so-called Southern School of Chan, which accepted Huineng 慧能 (638–713) as the "sixth patriarch" and of which the Hongzhou School was a representative, finally emerged from being one among many schools of early Chan to become the epitome of Chan orthodoxy. In the eyes of later Chan historians, the status of the Hongzhou School

[1] The culmination of that process was the creation of Sinic schools of Buddhism, which in addition to Chan also included schools like the Pure Land, Tiantai, and Huayan. Among these four, Tiantai and Huayan were initially more influential, especially at the level of elite Chinese religion, and their intricate doctrinal systems laid down much of the theoretical framework that came to define Chinese Buddhism. But is was the other two schools, Chan and Pure Land, known for their less complex teachings and more "practical" outlooks towards religious life, that eventually established themselves as the two main streams of Chinese Buddhism, positions they continued to occupy throughout the past millennium.

was further enhanced by the fact that it was a direct precursor of the powerful Linji School 臨濟宗, which dominated Chan history from the early Song 宋 (960–1281) period onwards, and whose putative founder Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866) was regarded as Mazu's third-generation disciple. Texts that purportedly recorded the words and deeds of Mazu and his great disciples were in due course taken to represented paradigmatic models of perfected religiosity. After they attained canonical status during the tenth and eleventh centuries, these records became core statements of Chan orthodoxy and as such they have ever since continued to shape the religious and social identity of the Chan/Zen traditions in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

Considering the central importance of Mazu and his Hongzhou School in the history of what for the last millennium has arguably been most influential school of Chinese (and by extension East Asian) Buddhism, an in-depth scholarly treatment of its history has long been overdue. This dissertation tries to fill that gap by presenting a comprehensive study of the Hongzhou School that deals with the main aspects of its development, including the pattern of its spread throughout the Tang empire, and the formation of its beliefs, modes of instruction, religious and social practices, and institutional structures. The present reassessment of all these aspects of the Hongzhou School's historical development was to some extent prompted by my impression that most current interpretations about this school of Chan are problematic, being for the most part based on untenable presuppositions and questionable textual evidence. In the following two sections I will briefly survey some of those views, starting with a general discussion of the historical study of Tang Chan, which will be followed by a brief examination of specific views about the Hongzhou School and its significance in the development of Chan orthodoxy.

**The Study of Tang Chan**

Although both traditional and modern historians regard the Tang dynasty as a crucial period in the development of Chan, they present somewhat different pictures of the formation of Chan orthodoxy. The still widely accepted traditional account, which is an intricate mixture of semi-historical narratives and mythic lore that evolved gradually and in its most-enduring version was finally canonized during the early Song period, is quite straightforward. The traditional recounting of the early part of Chan's history follows a strictly linear pattern: Chan began with the Indian monk Bodhidharma (d. 520?), the first Chinese "patriarch" of Chan, whose mystical transmission of the essence of Buddhist enlightenment was passed from teacher to disciple until it reached Huineng, the famous "sixth patriarch." Although the singular transmission of Chan supposedly ended with Huineng, the Southern School that descended from him greatly prospered and came to be accepted as undisputed Chan orthodoxy. After branching into two lineages under Huineng's two prominent second-generation disciples, Mazu and Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790), the Southern School entered its classical period, which culminated with the formation of the so-called five schools of Chan during the Tang-Song transition. The establishment of the Southern School was thus an unqualified success, and ever since all local traditions of Chan throughout East Asia have traced their origins to it.

In contrast to the straightforwardness of the traditional genealogical narrative about the early transmission of Chan, modern researchers have engaged in gradual reconstruction of a rather different picture of early Chan history, which is characterized by much greater complexity. That new picture, many parts of which are still changing as historical research progresses, contravenes or at least brings into question many important elements in traditional normative accounts of the early history of Chan. Much of the new

knowledge about the early phase of Chan's development was made possible by the discovery of numerous Chan texts in a cave in Dunhuang 敦煌 during the early twentieth century, some of which had been lost many centuries ago.[2] By utilizing those documents, and by critically examining other extant sources, we are now in a better position to paint a more balanced picture of the early development of Chan, to better understand its beliefs and practices, and to assess its position vis-à-vis the other traditions of Chinese Buddhism. The reconstruction of various parts of the history of early Chan, spearheaded by Japanese scholars and to a large extend based on the study of such Dunhuang manuscripts as *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記 and *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記, exposed the historical inaccuracy of the traditional Chan/Zen conception of its history as a straight line of transmission stemming from Bodhidharma and the other five Chinese patriarchs, and culminating with the classical tradition that begins with Huineng and his disciples. Instead, recent research revealed a plurality of views and a variety of approaches to Chan soteriology that existed during the early and middle Tang periods, which contributed to the formation of competing lineages that made claims to religious legitimacy.

The focus on the study on the early Chan documents recovered from Dunhuang, or on other long-lost texts such as *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 that were discovered elsewhere, was an understandable response to the excitement that accompanied the finding of a long-forgotten treasure-trove of valuable texts that shed light on phases of Chan history that previously were poorly understood. But although the extensive study of those texts led to much-improved understanding of the early history of Chan, it also led to a comparative neglect of research on the immediately succeeding stages of Chan's historical evolution.

[2] The most comprehensive studies of the Chan manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang are Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文獻の研究, and Shinohara Hisao 篠原壽雄 and Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, eds., *Tonkō butten to zen* 敦煌佛典と禪.

As a consequence, we now have, for example, two extensive English language studies of the Northern School of Chan (as well as other studies in Japanese). This school was very influential in its heyday during the early Tang, but was relegated to little more then a curious footnote in the early history of Chan, until recent scholarship led to a reassessment of its historical significance.[3] On the other hand, no similar studies have been made of Chan history during the middle and late parts of the Tang dynasty, or the Five Dynasties period, even though all subsequent Chan/Zen traditions came to consider this the "golden age" of Chan, a classical period during which seminal Chan figures like Mazu and his noted disciples created highly original expressions of uncontrived Chan religiosity.[4] This dissertation was initially motivated by a belief that there was a pressing need to redress this stark imbalance in Chan studies and to take a new look at the crucial early part of the classical period, when Chan surfaced as a unified and powerful religious movement.

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[3] The two main studies of Shenxiu and his Northern School are Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, and John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*.

[4] This view that the later part of the Tang dynasty was the "golden age" of Chan, also referred to as its classical period, is accepted by the Chan/Zen traditions in China, Korea, and Japan, as well as by most modern scholars. For example, see John McRae, "The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism: From Early Ch'an to the Golden Age," in Robert M. Gimello and Peter Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch'an and Hua Yen*, p. 170, and Henrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History*, vol. 1, pp. 158–59. Such a conception of middle and late Tang Chan have recently been challenged by Griffith Foulk, who has asserted that the "golden age" of Chan during the Tang was merely a product of Song Chan ideology and mythology (see below), and by Robert Buswell, who has argued that the designation "classical Chan" should primarily be used to refer to the Northern Song tradition, when Chan reached the pinnacle of its religious development with the *kanhua* practice formulated by Dahui (1089–1163). See Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, pp. 149–150, and Buswell, "The 'Short-cut' Approach of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 327–28.

In a sense, Mazu can be considered the actual "founder" of Chan as a distinct tradition of Chinese Buddhism that nominally still continues to exist (albeit in rather different forms) throughout East Asia. Mazu is commonly considered to be one of the most influential Chan teachers in the whole course of Chan history, closely following Bodhidharma and Huineng in the pantheon of Chan worthies. But from a purely historical perspective, the actual historical contributions of his two more famous predecessors, both of whom posthumously came to be recognized as the two pivotal figures in the development of early Chan, were fairly negligible. We know very little about the historical Bodhidharma, and his association with the Chan School was not firmly established for well over a century after his death. Bodhidharma's lack of clear link with the emergence of early Chan can be seen from his biography in Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (compiled in 645), where he is simply depicted as a meditation specialist without an indication that he was in any way connected with the newly emerging Chan movement.[5] Bodhidharma probably came to be recognized as the progenitor of Chinese Chan during the later part of the seventh century, when the nascent Chan movement, centered on the Dongshan tradition of the putative "fifth patriarch" Hongren 弘忍 (601–674) and his followers (sometimes referred to as the Lankāvatāra School), was trying to buttress its religious authority by forging a link between itself and Indian Buddhism. The relatively obscure Bodhidharma handily served to establish such a linkage by becoming a central figure in an imaginary ancestral lineage of Chan.[6] Before

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[5] T 50.551b-c.

[6] In its rudimentary form, the theory of the lineage of Chan patriarchs first appeared in Faru's (638–689) memorial inscription. This text is important because it connects the Bodhidharma-Huike and Dongshan groups into a single lineage for the first time. See Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究, pp. 35–46, and Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 27. This connection is also implied in the apocryphal *Vajrasamādhi Scripture*. See Robert Buswell, *The*

too long, the notion of a Chan lineage transmitted to China by him became firmly established as a central part of Chan ideology, especially after it was further elaborated with the creation of mythic narratives of the transmission of Chan in India that went all the way back to the historical Buddha. Among the competing transmission narratives, the one initially presented in the influential *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳 (composed in 801), which postulated a lineage of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, eventually came to be accepted as Chan orthodoxy. The retroactive attribution of the mystical transmission of the Chan lineage from India to China to Bodhidharma was a reflection of the emerging role of his mythologized image as an influential religious paradigm.[7] That development reflected the emergence of Chan tradition's sense of self-identity, but it had little to do with the historicity of Bodhidharma's actual activities and their direct impact on the course of Chan history.

The historicity of Huineng's connection with Chan is somewhat less problematic. Nonetheless, although unlike Bodhidharma he was associated with the Chan movement, during his lifetime Huineng was a marginal figure who exerted very limited influence on the shaping of Chan history. His emergence as a Chan patriarch par excellence was posthumous. He appeared in that role for the first time only during Heze Shenhui's 荷澤神會 (684–758) acrimonious campaigns against the so-called Northern School of Chan. The initial drive towards Huineng's canonization as the sixth Chan patriarch took place within a context of increased sectarian awareness and competition for prominence among

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*Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea: The* Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, *A Buddhist Apocriphon*, pp. 157–61.

[7] For a discussion of Bodhidharma's role as a religious paradigm, see Bernard Faure's "Bodhidharma as a Textual and Religious Paradigm," in *History of Religions* 25/3 (1986), pp. 187–98, a revised version of which can also be found in his *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, pp. 126–35.

the rival Chan groups. Because Shenhui was the first to advance the case of Huineng as the sixth Chan patriarch, and because before his death Shenhui received some sort of imperial acknowledgement, a number of modern scholars have given him large credit for the establishment of the Southern School as the orthodox tradition of Chan.[8]

Ever since the formative revisions of early Chan history first instigated by Hu Shi's groundbreaking studies of Shenhui's records that were discovered among the Dunhuang manuscripts, there has been a tendency to somewhat exaggerate his historical importance and the long-term impact of his anti-Northern School campaign.[9] Despite Shenhui's prolonged efforts to establish new notions of Chan orthodoxy, at the time of

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[8] For Shenhui's official recognition, see Ogawa Takashi 小川隆, "Kataku Jinne no hito to shisō" 荷澤神會の人と思想, ZK 69 (1991), pp. 52–53, and John McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, p. 237. The perceived importance of Shenhui's success in establishing his lineage as the orthodox one is first of all based on the evidence of his stele inscription composed in 765, which refers to him as the "seventh patriarch." See Takeuchi Kōdō, "Shinshutsu no Kataku Jinne tōmei ni tsuite," SK 27 (1985), pp. 313–25, and Yanagida, "Jinne no shōzō" 神會の肖像, ZBKK 15 (1988), pp. 228. Second, there is Zongmi's account of a meeting of Chan teachers convened by Emperor Dezong, which supposedly officially recognized him as the seventh patriarch of Chan. See *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖, XZJ 110.434b. Both of these accounts are problematic. The appellation "seventh patriarch" that appears in his stele inscription also appears in similar inscriptions dedicated to other contemporary Chan monks, and it was probably little more then a way in which his disciples could show respect to their recently deceased teacher. The term might have meant "a seventh-generation patriarch," rather that "*the* seventh patriarch." As to Zongmi's story, since it is not corroborated by any other evidence, it is most likely a fictional account, possibly created by Zongmi in order to add credence to his own efforts to resurrect Shenhui as inheritor of the orthodox lineage of Chan (and establish himself as the only heir of that lineage, and thus the main representative of Chan orthodoxy among his contemporaries).

[9] In addition to Hu Shi's works on Chan, examples of overstating Shenhui's importance can be found in the writings of Sekiguchi Shindai 關口眞大, who asserts that "Heze Shenhui establish the independence of the Southern School of Chan. During the early period of the Southern School of Chan, the Hoze School meant the Southern School of Chan, while the two schools of Jiangzhou (i.e. Hongzhou) and Shitou were nothing more then collateral branches." Sekiguchi, *Zenshū shisō shi no kenkyū* 禪宗思想 史の研究, p. 199. An analogous view about Shenhui's importance is also expressed in Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, pp. 353–55.

his death, as well as during the ensuing few decades, the Southern School he zealously championed (or perhaps even invented) did not enjoy uncontested prominence. During this period there were a number of influential Chan lineages, few of which were widely considered to be authentic representatives of the Chan movement. That situation continued as late as the early ninth century, as can be seen from the stele inscriptions composed for Mazu's disciples Ehu Dayi 鵝湖大義(746–818) and Xingshan Weikuan 興善惟寬 (755–817), both of whom were influential Chan teachers in Changan, the principal Tang capital. According to these early ninth century inscriptions, at the time there were four main Chan lineages: those derived from Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706) and Shenhui in the north, and Farong 法融(594–657) and Mazu in the south.[10] While Mazu's and Shenhui's lineages were representatives of the Southern School, the other two—Shenxiu's Northern School and the Niutou School, which considered Farong as its ancestral "founder"—were considered to be completely separate lines of transmission. The Southern School's rise to unchallenged preeminence was thus far from being a direct consequence of the decisive success of Shenhui's acrimonious campaigns. Rather, the Southern School's establishment as an uncontested Chan orthodoxy was for the most part

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[10] For Dayi's inscription, see *Xingfusi neidaochang gongfeng dade dayi chanshi beiming* 興福寺內道場供奉大德大義禪師碑銘, composed by Wei Chuhou 韋處厚 (773–823), QTW 715.3258a. For Weikuan's inscriptions, *Xijing xingshansi chuanfatang bei* 西京興善寺傳法堂碑, composed by Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846), see QTW 678.3069c–70a; *Boshi wenji* 白氏文集 41.11a–14a (SBCK ed.); and WYYH 866.4570b–71b. Both inscriptions are discussed in Chapter Six. While the Hongzhou School had an ecumenical vision of the Chan tradition that included the Northern and Niutou schools, Shenhui's followers seem to have continued to advocate a more narrow vision of Chan orthodoxy. The stele inscription of Shenhui's disciple Dabei (709–816) lists only two orthodox lineages, those of Huairang (the teacher of Mazu) and Shenhui, both of whom were disciples of Huineng. This might be the earliest mention of Huairang as a main successor of Huineng, written at the time when Mazu's disciples' influence was already established in the two capitals. See QTW 731.3344a, as well as Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 413–14, and Idem, "Goroku no rekishi: Zen bunken no seiritsu shiteki kenkyū" 語錄の歷史―禪文獻の成立史的研究, TG 57 (1985), pp. 445–46.

due to the remarkable success of Mazu and his numerous disciples. That coincided with the diminished vitality of the two other main Chan groups that were dominant during the middle part of the eight century, when Mazu first emerged as a popular teacher: the Northern School, which lost most of it vigor by the late eight century, and the Niutou School, whose last great leaders were Mazu's contemporaries Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714–792) and Niutou Huizhong 牛頭慧忠 (683–769).

### Current Views about the Hongzhou School

No book-length scholarly study devoted to the Hongzhou School has so far appeared in any language. That might seem somewhat surprising, considering the widely held view that the tradition formed by Mazu and his disciples was of crucial importance in the historical evolution of Chan as an independent school of Chinese Buddhism. To some extent this neglect stems from the fact that there is a set of normative views about the Hongzhou School and the rest of late Tang Chan that are firmly entrenched and commonly accepted as valid, without really being subjected to critical scrutiny. Those views reflect the enduring influence of the creeds and accumulated lore of the later (especially Song) Chan tradition in China. But perhaps even more, such views reflect the ways in which the ideologies of the sectarian Zen traditions in Japan continue to shape the scope and directions of modern Chan/Zen scholarship. That is especially true of the partisan views of Chan "history" upheld by the Rinzai sect (the Japanese offshoot of the Linji School), which as noted above sees the Hongzhou School as the direct precursor of the Linji School. Because many of those views are accepted almost as articles of faith by modern Japanese scholarship (which still remains by far the most productive and influential in the field of Chan studies), the basic sets of assumptions, and the interpretative frameworks and procedures that underlie them, are rarely re-examined. As

a consequence, relatively little critical research has been done on the Hongzhou School and the rest of classical Tang Chan; instead, most of the research efforts have gone into translating and interpreting the new Chan records found in Dunhuang. In addition to providing scholars with the prospect of participating in the creation of a whole new sub-field in Chan and Buddhist studies, the study of Dunhuang Chan documents is also more removed from, and thus less threatening to, established Zen orthodoxies.

Mazu and his famous disciples have, of course, been given cursory treatment in every general history of Chan/Zen. Virtually any study that deals with Chan is in one way or another concerned with them. They have also received greater attention in more specialized studies of Tang Chan. Over the years, there have been a number of articles that are concerned with various aspects of the Hongzhou School's history, doctrines, practices, and the like. Among the issues related to the Hongzhou School, the putative establishment of a unique system of Chan monasticism traditionally attributed to Mazu's best-known disciple Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814), which supposedly established the Chan School's institutional independence, has been the subject that has aroused the most sustained stream of scholarly articles.[11]

Among Japanese scholars who have written about the history and literature of Tang dynasty Chan, by far most influential in terms of shaping the current understanding of the Hongzhou School has been Yanagida Seizan. That in itself shows the lack of scholarly focus on the Hongzhou School, since only a small portion of Yanagida's prodigious corpus of books and journal articles on Chan deals with this school; the bulk of Yanagida's most influential scholarly publications deals with early Chan literature,

[11] The scholarship on this subject is reviewed in Chapter Nine.

especially with those texts that were recovered during the last century.[12] Since Yanagida's observations about the Hongzhou School are still very influential and most representative of current Chan scholarship, here I will present a rough outline of their main points.

In spite of their contrasting views about the study of Chan, earlier scholars, such as D. T. Suzuki and Hu Shih, portrayed the emergence of classical Chan as a radical rupture with the past Buddhist tradition, a momentous event of revolutionary proportions in the development of East Asian Buddhism. According to Hu Shi, the Chan of Mazu's disciples did away with "the medieval ghosts, the gods, the bodhisattvas and the Buddhas" and the like; for him Chan of the eight century was "no Chan at all, but a Chinese reformation or revolution within Buddhism."[13] Although Yanagida's scholarly work represents more informed and sophisticated scholarship than is evidenced in the writings of his two influential predecessors, he still accepts their interpretation of Chan as a radically new tradition whose formation represented the culmination of the Chinese transformation of Buddhism. According to him, Mazu's Hongzhou School was a novel iconoclastic tradition primarily defined by its far-reaching divergence from and repudiation of the beliefs and practices of earlier Chinese Buddhism.[14] The actual

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[12] Examples of this kind include the following volumes: *Daruma no goroku: Ninyū shigyō ron* 達摩の語錄—二入四行論, *Shoki no zenshi I: Ryōga shijiki, Denhōbōki* 初期の禪史I—楞伽師資記, 傳法寶紀, *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki* 初期の禪史II—歷代法寶記, *Sodōshu* 祖堂集 (*Daijō butten: Chūgoku, Nihon hen* 大乘佛典—中國, 日本篇, vol. 13), and Yanagida's masterpiece, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū.*

[13] Hu Shih, "Ch'an/Zen Buddhism in China: Its History and Method," *Philosophy East and West* 3/1 (1953), p. 17. See also Suzuki's rejoinder to Hu's article, "Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih," *Philosophy East and West* 3/1 (1953), pp. 25–46, and Faure's pertinent critique of Suzuki's and Hu's views in his *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, pp. 53–67, 94–99.

[14] See Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism" (translated by John McRae), in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, pp. 186–87. For

creation of the Chan School, which in Yanagida's view occurred under Mazu's and his great disciples' tutelage, represented a fundamental break from the whole preceding Buddhist tradition. That was tantamount to the creation of a completely new and distinctively Chinese religions tradition that profoundly reflected the unique cultural ethos and deeply ingrained religious sentiments of the Chinese people. According to Yanagida, because the Hongzhou School was so radically different from the rest of the Buddhist tradition, and because it represented an expression of unique forms of native Chinese religiosity, its texts were not sought by Tibetans (and are thus not found among the Dunhuang manuscripts), Koreans (*sic*), and pre-Kamakura Japanese pilgrims.[15] Both the Tibetans and the Japanese supposedly had difficulty relating to and understanding the original spiritual message and unique religious ideas of the new Chan movement led by Mazu. He describes the creation of such new Chan tradition as follows:

> The Chan that was transmitted from India escaped from the confines of the mysterious practice of meditation (*chan* 禪) and samādhi, and melted into everyday life as a religion of the pragmatic Chinese people from about the ninth century. That meant the onset of a new Chan School that did not exist in Indian Buddhism. The leading actors in the establishment of that new Chan School, who appear in the genealogical chart presented on the left, were Mazu of Jiangxi and Shitou of Hunan.[16]

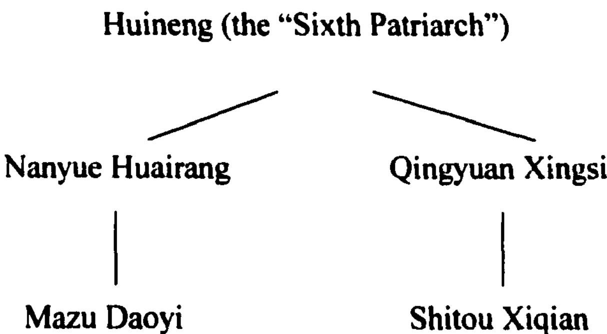
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similar general views of Tang Chan as a powerful Chinese reaction against the Buddhist traditions inherited from India, which do not specifically mention the Hongzhou School, see Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History*, pp. 77–79, and Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, pp. 350–64.

[15] Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai" 馬祖禪の諸問題, IBK 17/1, pp. 33–34. Concerning the Hongzhou School's influence outside of China, as we will see in Chapter Five, virtually all Korean monks who entered China during the early ninth century in order to learn Chan ended up studying under Mazu's disciples.

[16] Yanagida, "Chūgoku zenshū shi" 中國禪宗史, in Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, ed., *Zen no rekishi: Chūgoku* 禪の歷史—中國, pp. 48–49.

The genealogical chart referred to in the last sentence is the often-reproduced ancestral genealogy that represents the creation of the two branches of the "orthodox" Southern School that supposedly began with Huineng. All subsequent lineages of Chan throughout East Asia claimed to trace back their spiritual ancestry to these two branches. By virtue of that, Mazu and Shitou are viewed as crucial figures in the ancestral transmission of Chan, while their little-known teachers, Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744) and Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740), primarily serve as links between them and Huineng.




Although in the above quotation Yanagida follows the formulaic presentation of Mazu and Shitou as their generation's two main leaders of the Chan School and as ancestors to all later Chan lineages, in all his writings, Yanagida clearly indicates that in terms of Chan history Mazu was far more important than Shitou. For example, in the same article where the last quotation appears, in which he discusses Mazu's contributions in some detail but for the most part ignores Shitou, he explicitly states that: "We must say that the real development of the Chan School in China starts with Mazu."[17] In a similar vein, in another article Yanagida asserts that:

[17] Yanagida, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," p. 53. See also Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," p. 36, where he states that "during Zongmi's time (i.e. during the 820s–840s) the true representative of the Chinese Chan School was the Hongzhou School."

> The actual formation of the Chinese Chan School began with the multifarious activities of Mazu and his disciples. First of all, the use of the appellation "Chan School" (*chanzong* 禪宗) that clearly conveyed its meaning was a characteristic of their sermons. Following the coming to the fore of early Chinese Chan that started with Bodhidharma, the clear transition into the Chan School's period of real flourishing should be seen as occurring during the later period of Mazu's life. That is a conspicuous fact that can be recognized both in the doctrinal standpoint of their new Buddhist movement, as well as in its multifaceted social and institutional trends.[18]

Although he can rightly be accused of customarily emphasizing a Rinzai point of view, according to which Mazu is a prominent member of the orthodox line of transmission, Yanagida's assessment of Mazu and Shitou's relative importance is correct. As we will see in Chapter Four, during his lifetime Shitou was a relatively marginal figure who exerted little direct influence on the development of Chan. He did not emerge as a major figure in the history of Chan until after the end of the Huichang era (841–846) persecution of Buddhism, when groups that traced their lineage back to him were finally able to bestow on him the status of one of the seminal Chan teachers from the classical period, a position in the pantheon of eminent Chan teachers he has occupied ever since.

According to Yanagida's interpretation, the Hongzhou School formulated a uniquely new approach to Buddhist spirituality that was characterized by its immediacy, openness, and spontaneity. The Hongzhou School's reputed rejection of traditional models of religious praxis, its new rhetorical style, and its use of unconventional pedagogical devices—such as shouting, beating, and engagement in "question and answer" (*wenda* 問答) dialogues—were defining features of its novel soteriological paradigm. As the emergence of that new paradigm represented vital elements of native Chinese religiosity, it formed one of the main, and in some sense concluding, chapters in the long process of the Sinification of the Indian religion. With the emergence of the

[18] Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," p. 33.

Hongzhou School, Chan finally fully embraced everyday life as the ideal avenue for practice, which mainly consisted of spirited interaction between a Chan teacher and his students (i.e. encounter dialogue) and precluded "any attachment to the traditional Buddhist religious practices of meditation and scriptural exegesis."[19]

Yanagida's broad argument about the true establishment of the orthodox Chan School under Mazu and his disciples is based on his hypothesis that they initiated sweeping changes in the religious traditions they inherited, and established a new and clearly defined self-identity for the Chan movement. In the course of their revolution, they firmly planted the foundations for virtually all aspects of religious life that came to characterize Chan during its golden age. The creative and far-reaching transformation of religious life that was instituted by them, which was tantamount to a major paradigm shift in the history of Chinese Buddhism, involved four closely related developments.[20]

1. Establishment of a sectarian tradition based on the notion of a dharma lineage that originated with the historical Buddha. Bodhidharma, who transmitted the formless essence of the Buddha's enlightenment that cannot be found in any scripture or doctrine, supposedly brought that lineage to China. After the introduction of various early versions of the Chan lineage, the authors of *Baolin zhuan* (composed in 801) created the final version that contains a list of twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese Chan patriarchs, which was eventually accepted as the orthodox one. Since Yanagida believes that *Baolin zhuan* was a product of the Hongzhou School, he assumes that

[19] Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," p. 187, and Idem, "Zenshū goroku no keisei" 禪宗語錄の形成, IBK 18/1 (1969), p. 40.

[20] The first three are noted in Okimoto Katsumi's 沖本克己 brief summary of Yanagida's ideas, presented in his "Shingi kenkyū nōto" 清規研究ノート, in Sasaki Kyōgo 佐々木教悟, ed., *Kairitsu shisō no kenkyū* 戒律思想の研究, pp. 407–09.

the final codification of the "orthodox" version of the Chan lineage that finally brought to end all controversies about the transmission of Chan was due to the emergence of the members of Mazu's lineage as bearers of the new Chan orthodoxy.[21]

2. Establishment of independent Chan monasteries that signaled Chan School's repudiation of existing monastic mores and regulations, and its setting up of institutional independence from the rest of Chinese Buddhism. This development was supposedly initiated by Baizhang, who codified the regulations for a novel system of Chan monasticism he first instituted at his monastery. Baizhang's regulations for Chan monasteries were soon adopted by the whole Chan School, and served as a basis for the creation of distinct denominational identity.[22]
3. Creation of a new style of religious praxis centered on the "encounter dialogue" model of religious training. Having rejected all established forms of Buddhist practice, including the practice of formal meditation that characterized early Chan, under Mazu's leadership the Hongzhou School developed the new "encounter dialogue" (also referred to as "question and answer") model of practice, which became the centerpiece of its bold new approach to religious training. The spontaneous patterns of interactions between Chan teachers and their disciples, which could be both verbal and physical, thus become the foci of spiritual discipline. Through them Chan teachers directly communicated the deep truths of enlightenment

[21] See Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 360–61, 405–16, Idem, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu: jo no ichi" 新 續燈史の系譜—敘の一, ZK 59 (1978), p. 34, and Idem, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," pp. 56–58.

[22] See Yanagida, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," pp. 58–60, Idem, "Basozen no sho mondai," p. 34, and Idem, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 250, 472, 548. The legend about Baizhang's establishment of the first set of rules for Chan monasteries will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.

in ways that often defied reason and logic. Within this new paradigm of religious training, which stood in sharp contrast to all earlier *mārga*-centric soteriological schemata of Indian and Chinese Buddhism, the focus shifted away from the teachings and practices that typified canonical Buddhism, and towards the actual human words and actions of enlightened Chan teachers (*chanshi* 禪師). That was tantamount to creating a revolutionary new approach to Buddhist spirituality, within which truth was actualized in the context of everyday life, and in which spiritual realization was readily accessible to anyone.[23]

4. Creation of a new type of Chan literature, principally represented by the "records of sayings" genre. There is a close connection between this and the previous point, because according to Yanagida the "attention to the Master's actions as models of enlightened behavior led directly to the development of the 'recorded sayings'

[23] See Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," pp. 37–38, Idem, "Chūgoku zenshū shi," pp. 53–56, Idem, "Zenshū goroku no keisei," p. 40. Yanagida takes the appearance of the encounter dialogue model as a given fact, and thus he does not dedicate much space to documenting its emergence. Nonetheless, this notion greatly informs virtually all his writings about the Hongzhou School. For a more comprehensive presentation of the encounter dialogue model, see John McRae, "Encounter Dialogue and the Transformation of the Spiritual Path in Chinese Ch'an," in Robert E. Buswell and Robert M. Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, pp. 339–69. McRae's discussion is obviously influenced by Yanagida's views, especially in his belief that encounter dialogue was actually the main mode of Chan practice that replaced all other forms of spiritual cultivation. On the other hand, he also somewhat distances himself from Yanagida's assertion that the Hongzhou School developed this model of practice. However, he does that without presenting an alternative explanation of its historical development, which makes his claim that the encounter dialogue was an actual model of religious training seem somewhat incredulous. If McRae cannot trace the origins of the stories that feature the famous encounter dialogues of the great Tang teachers, he is on an unstable ground when he uncritically accepts Yanagida's views about Chan's establishment of the encounter dialogue model of practice without delving more deeply into the origin of the stories where it appears, and without critically questioning the notion that the sources used by him are authentic records that depict the actual religious practices of Chan monks. In the end, McRae presents an unconvincing account of Chan practice that is based on the least authentic parts of the records of sayings and transmission of the lamp chronicles, and which amounts to little more then modern reformulation of normative Zen narratives.

genre."[24] These unique texts recorded Mazu's and his disciples' novel teachings, which were primarily delivered in the "question and answer" style described above, and as sermons presented in an original format instituted by them as part of their revolutionary transformation of Chinese Buddhism. In what represented a new development in the history of Buddhist literature in China, these text were recorded in vernacular Chinese, and their personal tone and direct manner of presentation became model for all later Chan records. [25]

While on the whole I agree with Yanagida's general assessment of the Hongzhou School's seminal importance in the history of Chinese Buddhism, I find his views on each of the four points presented above to be problematic. I will make my arguments about all of these issues—viz., the creation of a sectarian tradition based on the notion of a lineage of dharma transmission, the establishment of institutionally independent Chan monasteries, the emergence of the encounter dialogue as the main medium of religious instruction, and the creation of new Chan literature represented by the innovative records of sayings genre—in the following chapters.

Yanagida's views, as well as similar views articulated by other scholars, resonate with the accounts of the golden age of Chan presented in a series of influential Chan histories that started to be compiled during early Song Period, the most influential of which was *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (composed in 1004). Such views also show the unmistakable influence of the ideological representation of the history of

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[24] Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," p. 187. The close relationship between the two developments is also stressed in Yanagida, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu: jo no ichi," p. 19.

[25] This is the development to which Yanagida has devoted the most sustained attention. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 457–548, Idem, "Zenshū goroku no keisei," pp. 39–45, and Idem, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," pp. 185–205.

Chinese Chan created by the sectarian traditions of Japanese Zen. Because of the pervasiveness of that influence, despite their adoption of the critical methods of historiographic research, to a large extent Japanese scholars still operate within a restricted field defined by the biased assumptions of Song Chan historiography and the narrow notions of religious legitimacy that define the sectarian tenets of Japanese Zen. In a way, most Chan/Zen scholarship still tries to construct a modern historical narrative that neither upsets many of the cherished notions of Chan/Zen orthodoxy, nor undermines the mythos of their tradition's uniqueness.[26]

The above interpretation of the rise of the Hongzhou School and its historical significance within the broader context of the development of Chinese Buddhism still has wide currency. At the same time, during the last few decades Western scholars gradually began to question a number of general assumptions about the main issues that shaped the course of Chan history, which relate to the main points summarized above. There has been little research of any greater significance that deals with the Hongzhou School directly, but in recent Western scholarship there is an increasing tendency to challenge some of the normative notions about the history of Tang Chan. Interesting contributions to the field of Chan studies that exemplify such trends have been made by Griffith Foulk,

[26] Even though I am frequently in disagreement with a number of views and interpretations propounded by Yanagida and other Japanese scholars, that certainly does not mean that I want to downplay their huge contributions to the advancement of our knowledge about the history of Chan. Although most of my main views about the topic studied here were formed before I became acquainted with Japanese scholarship, in the course of preparing the present study I greatly benefited from the wealth of information and numerous valuable insight found in the works of scholars like Yanagida, Ishii Shūdo, Suzuki Tetsuo, and Shiina Kōyū, without whose monumental research I would not have been able to write at the level of detail evidenced in the present work. Although I often diverge from the explanations presented in the writings of Yanagida and other Japanese scholars, it was my awareness of the need to redress problems associated with the assumptions put forward in them that in many instances influenced the approach I adopted in dealing with a number of important issues discussed in the following pages.

whose work has mainly focused on the institutional history of the Chan School. Especially relevant to the present discussion is Foulk's questioning of the very notion that there was a "golden age" of Chan during the Tang period that was spearheaded by Mazu and his disciples, which he formulated in an influential article on monastic practice in Song Chan Buddhism. According to him, an image of the golden age of Chan, as accepted by Japanese scholars on the basis of documentary evidence presented by the records of sayings and transmission of the lamp histories, was merely a product of Song Chan ideology. Foulk argues that since the texts that supposedly depict the teachings of Tang teachers were written during the Song, as such they are most relevant for the study of Song Chan, the period during which they were compiled.[27] As those Chan records constituted "a body of religious mythology, a sacred history that served polemical, ritual, and didactic functions in the world of Song Chan," we are lead to assume that they bear little (if any) relevance to the study of Tang Chan.[28]

Foulk is correct when he states the Song transmission of the lamp histories and records of sayings should not be taken at face value as faithful descriptions of Tang Chan. Doing so does result in the formulation of inaccurate historical representations. However, Foulk overstates his case when he asserts that the early Song was the period when the traditional image of the Hongzhou School and the whole classical Chan tradition was created, in what according to him was tantamount to Song Chan's successful "drawing attention away from its own creativity and directing it instead to the ostensible glories of the past."[29] In fact, the creation of that image was an integral part of the development of distinct Chan ideology, a gradual process that took place during the preceding Five

[27] Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," p. 149.

[28] Ibid., pp. 149–50.

[29] Ibid., p. 149.

Dynasties period (907–960). Thus, although it is true that the images of Chan's golden age presented in the transmission of the lamp chronicles and other similar texts composed during the Song probably did not accurately reflect the realities of religious life during the Tang, that does not necessarily mean that the golden age of Chan was simply a pious creation of a Song tradition eager to create a pseudo-historical account of its illustrious spiritual ancestry. Rather, Song texts present us with an inaccurate portrayal of a celebrated tradition that actually existed and was immensely influential. It is certainly not simply the case that we are dealing with fictional narrations of tradition's glorious past created solely in response to the exigencies confronted by the leaders of Song Chan, as Foulk suggests.

Foulk's assumptions about the manner in which Chan histories were created also ignore the complex literary process that was involved in the compilation of these and other similar texts. For example, the fact that the oldest extant version of a particular Chan biography or sermon appears in a late Five Dynasties or early Song compilation does not necessarily mean that the text is a Song work of fiction. As I will discuss in Chapter One, imperially-sponsored Chan histories were based on extant Chan documents, just as the official histories of the Tang period were written after the fall of the Tang on the basis of extant Tang materials. It is true that the compilers of the transmission of the lamp "histories" probably never intended to provide factual historical records, as modern historians understand the term.[30] As participants in the historical development of Chan, they probably actively shaped and transformed the present of their tradition as much as they recorded its past. At the same time as their search for religious and social

[30] For the question of historical consciousness in Ch'an, see John C. Maraldo, "Is there Historical Consciousness in Ch'an?" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 12/2–3 (1985), pp. 141–172, and Dale S. Wright, "Historical Understanding: The Ch'an Buddhist Transmission Narratives and Modern Historiography," *History and Theory* 31/1 (1992), pp. 37–46.

legitimization was creating an iconoclastic image of the Hongzhou School and the rest of classical Chan, the Song redactors were also preserving materials that are of great value for the study of Tang Chan. The challenge of present scholarship is to scrutinize these materials carefully and establish criteria for distinguishing the elements of Chan narratives that are pertinent to the study of Tang Chan from those that are more useful for understanding the social and religious milieus of the Chan traditions that flourished during the Five Dynastics and Song periods.[31]

To sum up, Foulk makes an important point about the later creations of mythologized and to a large extent fictional images of the golden age of Chan. At the same time, there is no real justification for his apparent dismissal of the classical

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[31] Foulk bases his assertion that the Chan records of sayings and the transmission of the flame histories were products of Song Chan historians' drive to create a new body of religious mythology that would sustain the claim to religious leadership made by the Song Chan School on four briefly stated points. See Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," p. 149. All of his brief arguments are rather problematic, and none of them really demonstrates that the golden age of Chan was a fictional product of imaginative Song writers. What follows is my response to each of the points made by him. (1) It is true that the evidence from Dunhuang texts and other recently discovered Tang texts shows that the Song depiction of the early Chan lineage presented in texts such as ZTJ and CDL is a fabrication. All the same, Foulk's implicit inference that because the early records about the transmission of Chan throughout the twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs are fictions, that must also imply that all records about late Tang Chan are also fictions is unwarranted and unsupported by any concrete evidence. (2) Foulk's assumption that the hagiographies and discourse records of the late Tang Chan masters survive only in late, post-Tang collections is incorrect; he seems to be unaware of much of the epigraphic evidence from the Tang (like the two stele inscriptions mentioned above), and of such important ninth century Chan documents as *Guishan jingce* (a copy of which was discovered in Dunhuang). (3) Foulk's assertion that the literary qualities of these texts—such as use of metaphor, symbolism, dramatic devices, realistic settings—are typical of fiction is correct only if applied to the encounter dialogue stories found in Song texts. But the encounter dialogue is only one sub-genre of these texts, the one with the least historical value. For the extant Tang documents, which mainly consist of stele inscriptions, transcripts of sermons, and written discourses, Foulk's observation is incorrect. (4) Foulk's final point, that Chan's conception of lineage is itself a religious, not a historical, category is debatable (there were actual historical links between teachers and disciples for which there is contemporary evidence), and not really relevant (religious categories, after all, can be a subject of historical study).

tradition, or his implicit assertion that little can be said about it due to the dearth of dependable sources. Such forced judgments do not take into sufficient account the provenance of the sources that were used to codify the Song Chan ideology, and gloss over the historical realities of Tang Chan and the textual sources that can help us to unravel those realities. To assert that a historically inaccurate image of Tang Chan was formed or codified during the early Song is a valid statement, and one with which I readily concur. But that does not constitute a valid basis for questioning the very existence of a vibrant and immensely influential Chan tradition that flourished during the Tang, especially if that is made without awareness of all sources available for its study.

In the following pages, I try to tread a middle ground between the divergent views about the Hongzhou School and its place in the historical evolution of Chan that were reviewed above. On one hand, my approach implies not accepting at face value depictions of the Hongzhou School as a novel iconoclastic tradition that represented a sharp break with earlier Buddhism, because those depictions are based on problematic interpretations of the least reliable types of textual sources. Such views reflect the ideological stance of the Song Chan tradition and the biased views about Chan history informed by Japanese sectarian polemics, but are at odds with the Tang sources, which paint a much more conservative picture of mid-Tang Chan. At the same time, I also find to be equally unwarranted the kind of historical revisionism that, without marshalling credible evidence in support of its assertions, declares that the glories of the Hongzhou School and the rest of classical Chan were mere products of Song Chan myth-making.

There were valid reasons why Song historians canonized Mazu and his great disciples as seminal figures in the history of Chan. They did so because those monks exert enormous influence on the course of the tradition's history, and the collective memory of their accomplishments and significance was transmitted by later generations

of Chan adherents as a centerpiece of the ever-increasing corpus of Chan lore. Later generations added new elements to that communal remembrance, which as time went on became more heavily laden with the kind of mythic motifs and legendary accounts that typify the hagiographic process. The whole process culminated with Song histories of Chan like *Chuandeng lu*. The hagiographies of Hongzhou monks found in such texts probably had rather less to do with the realities of mid-Tang Chan and more with the circumstances and issues that were of concern to the later schools of Chan. But the activities of those monks and their actual place in Tang religious life are crucial parts of Chan history (and by extension of Chinese religious history), and it is their story that needs to be told.

## Historical Background

The story of the Hongzhou School's formation begins around the early 760s, when Mazu began to attract an increasing number of disciples and to emerge as the most influential Chan teacher in the Jiangxi area. The Hongzhou School's initial emergence coincided with the end of the An Lushan rebellion, the watershed event in the history of the Tang empire, and arguably one of the major turning points in Chinese history. Although the central government was able to marshal enough resources to finally put an end to the rebellion in 763 (which also required the assistance of foreign, mostly Uighur, troops), and also managed to deal with the smaller rebellions that followed in its wake, the last four decades of the eight century were for the most part a period marked by political and social instability. The overall situation of the empire, which lost effective control of most of the northeastern provinces and found itself in unpropitious financial and military predicaments, stood in contrast to the peace, stability, and prosperity that characterized Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756) long reign, which abruptly ended soon after the

beginning of An Lushan's military insurrection against the central government from his stronghold in the Northeast.[32] Nonetheless, after a few decades of struggles and occasional setbacks, during the reign of emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805–820) the imperial government was finally able to re-establish a balance in the relationship between the center and provinces, and to restore much of the power and prestige of the Tang state. The foundations for the restoration were to a large extent laid during the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805), whose attempts at reasserting central control over provincial administration strengthened the empire's power and made it possible for Xianzong to adopt his ambitious policies and to assert an activist form of governance.[33]

During the post-rebellion period, Buddhism continued to dominate the religious life of the Tang empire.[34] Though imperial support was still a significant factor that contributed to the flourishing of Buddhism, more important for the increasing strength and influence of the Southern Chan movement was the shift of political and economic power to the provinces. That was especially the case with the Southern provinces, which escaped the destruction and warfare inflicted to most of North China during the course of the rebellion.[35] This development brought about different patterns of economic sponsorship for the Buddhist community, with official government support becoming somewhat less important in comparison to the early Tang period. At the same time, there was an increase in the importance of the support extended to Buddhist monasteries and

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[32] For a survey of the conditions that contributed to rebellion's outbreak, see Edwin Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan.*

[33] Charles A. Peterson, "The Restoration Completed: Emperor Hsien-tsung and the Provinces," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the Tang*, pp. 153–54.

[34] For the relationship between the Buddhist order and the Tang state during this period, see Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 77–144.

[35] See Charles A. Peterson, "Court and province in mid- and late Tang," in Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part I*, pp. 464–560.

temples by those who controlled the new centers of regional power. In such an environment, the Chan movement in the provinces was able to benefit from the economic and political patronage of the increasingly powerful local rulers and officials, and to develop a loosely connected network of regional centers from which Chan could exert its increasing influence.

The Hongzhou School directly benefited from the expanding importance of the empire's southern provinces, the school's main stronghold, in the political, cultural, and economic life of the Tang empire. Under the dynamic leadership of Mazu's able disciples, the Hongzhou School was able to expand quickly its influence beyond its geographical center in Jiangxi and the surrounding areas, and by the beginning of the ninth century it become the most influential and dynamic Chan tradition in the whole empire. It is interesting to note that the Hongzhou School's initial creation of a regional basis in and around Jiangxi, the area where Mazu taught during the last few decades of his life and where a number of his disciples established their own monastic communities, coincided with the imperial government's weakened ability to assert central control and the formation of regional centers of power during Daizong's 代宗 (r. 762–779) reign, which also extended during the early part of Dezong's reign. On the other hand, following its initial spread beyond the south during the later part of Dezong's reign, the Hongzhou School's true emergence on the national scene as a major religious tradition took place during Xianzong's reign, at a time when there was a resurgence of the Tang state's power and a restoration of the dynasty's prestige.

The emergence of the Hongzhou School also coincided with significant changes in Tang intellectual life. The main event was the Confucian revival of the post-rebellion period, which is often regarded as a precursor, or even an early beginning, of the Neo-Confucian movement that assumed its clear contours during the Northern Song (960–

1126), and culminated with Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) grand synthesis during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279).[36] This period saw the gradual emergence of new attitudes and a subtle shift in values that, under the influence of Buddhism, reflected a new interest among the literati in individual ideals and experiences. That was accompanied by a shift of moral authority from the court to the individual literati who have realized the *dao* 道—a move that paralleled the devolvement of political power away from the court—that made the individual literati responsible for transforming society.[37] As noted by David McMullen, the intellectual world of late eight and early ninth century was much less centralized in the capital of Changan 長安, and no longer dominated by the court as it was during the early Tang period. During this period, most important intellectual developments took place unofficially, and represented individual literati's personal responses to the more decentralized political order of the post-rebellion period.[38]

Middle Tang was the beginning of the "deep interiorization" of the Confucian tradition, which was manifested in the writings of such *guwen* 古文 ("old-style writing") advocates as Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), Li Ao 李翱 (772–841), and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819). [39] Early precursors of these intellectual changes were the late eight-century

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[36] For the major intellectual currents during this period, see Edwin Pulleyblank "Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Legalism in T'ang Intellectual Life, 755—805," in Arthur F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian Persuasion*, pp. 77–111, and Peter Bol, *"This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China*, pp. 108–149. The impact of changes in intellectual outlook on poetry and writing during the same period are discussed in Stephen Owen, *The End of the Chinese 'Middle Ages': Essays in Mid-Tang Literary Culture*.

[37] Bol, "*This Culture of Ours*," p. 147.

[38] David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 69–70.

[39] For Li Ao's life and thought, including his relationship with Buddhism, see T. H. Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?*; for Han Yu, see Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search*

*xingming* 性命 ("nature and destiny") scholars, who moved to the Southeast (which included the area where the Hongzhou School initially consolidated itself) during the rebellion period. The intellectual outlook of these scholars was characterized by its interior emphasis. That included the redefinition in Confucian terms of questions of ultimate value, whose elucidation animated much of the predominant Buddhist intellectual discourse. At the same time, these scholars showed interest in seclusion, religious contemplation, and investigation of the relationship between heaven and man.[40]

Despite the emergence of strong anti-Buddhist tendencies among a few of the scholars associated with the *guwen* movement, which are especially evident in the writings of Li Ao and Han Yu, there are some striking parallels between the increased interest in self-cultivation and the emergence of more independent intellectual attitudes among the *guwen* scholars, on the one hand, and the Chan emphasis on the value of personal religious experience and its rejection of external formulations (including the scriptures) as final arbiters of ultimate values, on the other. In his study of Han Yu (the most anti-Buddhist of all Tang Confucians), Charles Hartman points out a number of parallels between the mid-Tang Confucian renewal and Chan, of which the Hongzhou School was the main representative. Those parallels include: a drive towards more human actualization of life, manifested in increasing emphasis on bringing intellectual and religious concerns closer to daily life; activist, positive spirit; assertion of the inner goodness and intrinsic worth of human nature; belief in mind as the basis of wisdom, and humanistic and iconoclastic attitude towards scripture; and postulation of mind/nature as

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*for Unity*; and for Liu Zongyuan, see Chen Jo-shui, *Liu Tsung-yuan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-819.*

[40] McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 105–06.

a basic ontological principle.[41] Although it is debatable whether we can postulate the emergence of a distinct mid-Tang *Weltanschauung*, of which both Chan and the *guwen* movement were integral and somehow related parts, some of the parallels between the two are striking and merit further consideration.

**The Hongzhou School in Relation to Mid-Tang Buddhism**

The emergence of the Hongzhou School was undoubtedly a significant event in the history of Chan, which at the time was still in the process of becoming one of the main strains of elite Chinese Buddhism. Nonetheless, we need to be careful not to overestimate the Hongzhou School's importance or misjudge its place in mid-Tang Buddhism. Undoubtedly many monks came to study with famous Chan teachers, and Mazu attracted the largest number of disciples among all Chan teachers of the classical period. Nonetheless, those monks still constituted a very small portion of the Tang clergy. As Tang sources, such as the diary of the pilgrimage to Tang monasteries composed by the Japanese Tendai priest Ennin 圓仁 (799–852), clearly indicate, the vast majority of monks were not associated with Chan or any of the other new Sinic schools of Buddhism that were formed during the Sui-Tang period.[42] As a matter of fact, most of those schools were little more then small groups of monks gathered at a few monastic sites, usually centered around famous teachers who developed innovative exegetical traditions or novel

[41] Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*, pp. 6–8. For a discussion of parallels between Chan's construction of patriarchal lineage and the traditional emphasis on ancestor worship in Confucianism, see John Jorgensen, "The Imperial Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimization in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers in Far Eastern History* 35 (1987), pp. 89–133.

[42] See *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (838–847), in *Dainihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書 113.169–282, and Edwin O. Reischauer, trans., *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*.

systems of Buddhist doctrine and/or practice. For example, despite the great success of its body of teachings, which was widely perceived as one of the crowning intellectual achievements of Chinese Buddhism, a "school" like Huayan was little more than the thought of three brilliant monks, Zhiyan 智儼 (602–668), Fazang 法藏 (643–712), and Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839). The Huayan School was essentially a school of Buddhist philosophy that lacked any distinct institutional base and sectarian identity. Even the very notion of a "Huayan School" was not in vogue at the time when the monks who were retroactively labeled as its founding patriarch were still alive, and there is little to indicate that they were concerned with creating anything approximating a new sectarian tradition.

One of the problems in the study of Chinese Buddhism is that all too often discussions of its medieval history primarily focus on the schools of Buddhism (which, by the way, is also what I am doing here).[43] The drawback of that approach is that it often creates the false impression that the study of those schools' teachings gives a complete picture of medieval Chinese Buddhism, while in reality those schools involved very small segments of the Buddhist community. Most of the Sinitic schools existed solely as bodies of religious beliefs and doctrines that brought together small numbers of monks with similar interests, like the intellectually-predisposed monks who formed the Dilun and Shelun schools during the sixth century, or the Sanlun School and the aforementioned Huayan School during the Sui-Tang period. Of course, the influence some of these schools exerted on the directions in which Chinese Buddhism was evolving was

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[43] In many instances, the adoption of this approach reflects the influence of Japanese scholarship. While the narrow sectarian model is suitable for the study of certain periods of the history of Japanese Buddhism—virtually all of Tokugawa period (1615–1868) Buddhism, for example, was subsumed under official sects like Tendai, Shingon, Sōtō Zen, etc.— it cannot be applied in any meaningful sense to any period of Chinese history. Quite to the contrary, the application of that model often brings about serious problems since it unwittingly superimposes later Japanese sectarian structures and institution to earlier Chinese traditions in which nothing of the sort ever existed.

disproportional larger than the small number of monks involved in them might suggest. Because of that influence, and because they left the largest number of religious texts and historical records, these schools are immensely important for our understanding of specific aspects of Chinese Buddhism. But even as we study them, we need to keep in mind that we are concerned only with parts of the vast Buddhist tradition that dominated religious life in medieval China.

In virtually all instances, the study of a particular Sinic school of Buddhism involves learning about a limited segment of the Buddhist community, which usually consisted of members of either the national or local monastic elites, and their upper-class lay supporters and followers. The case of Chan was not that different, even though by the early ninth century the Chan School attracted to itself more monks than any of the other schools. One reason for that popularity was that the teachings of Chan were relatively simpler, and thus somewhat more accessible to a wider audience, when compared to other arcane doctrinal formulations, especially those promulgated by the Tiantai and Huayan schools. All the same, they were still directed to and accepted by only a relatively small potion of the larger Buddhist community, and exerted little direct influence on the religious life of most commoners.[44] Therefore, when we focus on the mid-Tang Chan movement, we are unquestionably dealing with a spiritually vibrant and influential movement, but also a movement that was only a part of a Chinese Buddhist

[44] Notwithstanding Japanese scholars' views about Chan's virtual takeover of Chinese Buddhism, throughout the Tang Chan remained a tradition with limited number of followers. Even during the Northern Song, when Chan received direct state support as main Buddhist orthodoxy, only a very small number of elite monasteries were designated as "ten directions Chan monasteries." Although they were considered to be empire's elite monastic centers, these large monasteries constituted only a tiny fraction of the thousands of Buddhist establishments that doted the land. See Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," p. 163–67. As Foulk points out (p. 166), of the eighty-eight large public monasteries that received name plaques for their main gates (most of which were imperially-bestowed ), only forty-eight were designated as Chan monasteries.

tradition of astounding breadth and diversity. Throughout the Tang (or for that matter during all subsequent periods), Chan represented the intellectual and religious concerns of a relatively narrow and mostly elite segment of the broader community of religious believers, and existed as an integral part of the larger tradition of mainstream Chinese Buddhism.

Before I go any further, it might be useful to consider briefly what the designation "Hongzhou School" meant within the context of Tang Buddhism. It is not entirely clear whether the term was used at all by Mazu and his disciples, or whether it was introduced from without the movement to refer to them as a distinct group. One of the earliest uses of the term can be found in the writings of Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841), who uses it in a general descriptive sense to refer to the teachings of Mazu and his followers.[45] The term comes from the name of the prefecture where Mazu taught during the final years of his life, and where a number of his disciples, including Baizhang, continued to be active after his death. It is entirely possible that the term Hongzhou School only came into vogue during Zongmi's time, a few decades after Mazu's death. In any event, since it is widely used in contemporary scholarship, and because it is a convenient way to refer to Mazu and his disciples as a distinct group within Tang Chan, here I have also adopted the name Hongzhou School.

It is important to point out that in the present usage the term "Hongzhou School" is not intended to carry the kinds of sectarian connotations that are usually assumed in Japanese Chan/Zen scholarship. In this study, the designation "Hongzhou School" is used to refer to a loose group within Tang Buddhism, in which Mazu was widely recognized as the main spiritual leader, and which was composed of his disciples and their followers.

[45] See *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu*, XZJ 110.434b, 438a.

In that sense, the Hongzhou School was a part of the Chan movement that established some form of distinct religious self-identity, and which was united by common adherence to sets of beliefs, doctrines, and practices, not all of which were necessarily defined with unquestionable clarity. It was a confraternity of monks (and perhaps a few layman) who shared similar views about the path to spiritual awakening, and who were united by a group identity that to some extent was formed by acceptance of the notion of Dharma transmission stemming from a common ancestor.[46]

The extant records of the main Hongzhou teachers reveal a noticeable homogeneity in religious outlook and a shared vision of the spiritual path. The presence of such a shared viewpoint strongly suggests that these monks formed a unified school of thought, rather than an assemblage of teachers who espoused diverse conceptions of Chan. That does not mean, however, that the Hongzhou School was a separate institutional entity or formally organized religious faction, not to mention a sectarian movement in the manner presented in Japanese scholarship (whose notions of sect-formation are profoundly influenced by the formation of sectarian identity in Japanese Buddhism). The monks associated with the Hongzhou School shared several overlapping identities that, following their Mahayana Buddhist beliefs, were not reified. While they considered themselves to be followers of Mazu and his teachings, and thus part of the broader Chan tradition, they were still primarily Buddhist monks whose identity was shaped by the cumulative wisdom of the ancient Buddhist tradition, and whose actions where molded by mainstream monastic values and mores.

In a strictly formal sense, the designation "Chan monks" does not denote official membership in a distinct denomination with clearly defined institutions and ecclesiastical

[46] See Foulk "The Ch'an *Tsung* in Medieval China: School, Lineage, or What?" *The Pacific World* 8 (1992), p. 19.

structures. There was no such thing as ordination as a Chan monk, and the term only designates a Buddhist monk who, led by personal considerations or other circumstances, chooses to reside and practice in a community whose spiritual leader was recognized as a Chan teacher. The monasteries that were led by Chan teachers who belonged to the Hongzhou School did not have clearly defined institutional identity that existed outside of the mainstream ecclesiastical structures, nor were they closed sectarian centers that imposed acceptance of any narrow religious outlook. As the extant records indicate, they were open to monks of various persuasions, and were part of the broader Chinese monastic establishment in which there were no clear lines of demarcation between various schools and traditions.

### Objectives and Organization of the Present Study

As was already indicated, this dissertation is a comprehensive historical study of the Hongzhou School of Chan Buddhism. It focuses on Mazu and his first generation disciples. In terms of Tang chronology, it covers the middle-Tang period, approximately from the time of the An Lushan rebellion until the end of Xianzong's reign, which coincides with the reign of four Tang emperors: Daizong, Dezong, Shunzong (r. 805), and Xianzong. That is a period of more than half a century (roughly 760–820), which constitutes the main phase of the Hongzhou School's development. The dissertation examines the historical context of the initial establishment of the Hongzhou School in the South during the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion, its quick spread throughout most of the Tang empire during the following few decades, and its eventual development into the main tradition of Chan during Xianzong's reign.

In addition to tracing the historical trajectory of its emergence as an influential religious movement that from the ninth century onwards came to be commonly

recognized as central Chan orthodoxy, the present study also explores the development of the Hongzhou School's beliefs and doctrines, literary and rhetorical styles, religious and social practices, modes of instruction, and attitudes towards monastic institutions. As such, the dissertation tries to fill a major gap in Chan studies by offering the first comprehensive study of a crucial phase in Chan's emergence as a major school of Chinese Buddhism, and proposing new interpretations about the evolution of classical Chan soteriological schemata and institutional structures. By looking at the Hongzhou School from different complementary perspectives—literary, historical, religious, and social/institutional—I try to convey as much as possible the complexity and fullness of its conception of religious life, and highlight the institutional dynamics that shaped the multifarious patterns of its interaction with the broader social currents and religious milieus of mid-Tang China. In the course of examining its history, I also attempt to ascertain how the Hongzhou School established its self-identity and defined its relationship with the rest of Buddhism, and to determine what were the main factors that contributed to its success in becoming the dominant tradition of Chan.

Because there are numerous problems related to the study of Chan texts and other related documents, and more specifically to ascertaining the dating, origin, and authenticity of most of the literary sources that are pertinent to the study of the Hongzhou School's history, in Part One (Chapters One and Two) I start with a critical analysis of the relevant Chan literature. The examination of the literary structure, contents, and origins of Chan texts presented in the first two chapters was deemed necessary because in order to undertake a comprehensive historical study of mid-Tang Chan it is imperative to understand first the provenance of the relevant documents and determine their value as historical sources. In Part Two, which constitutes a study of the Hongzhou School's early history, I start with a comprehensive biography of its illustrious founder Mazu (Chapters

Three and Four). That is followed by a broad survey of the Hongzhou School's spread from its base in Hongzhou throughout the southern provinces (Chapter Five), and eventfully throughout most other parts of the Tang empire, including the two capitals (Chapter Six). In Part Three, I examine the Hongzhou School's religious doctrines and practices in relation to the broader contexts in which they were developed and enacted. The first part of this section deals with the main doctrinal tenets and methods of spiritual practice taught by Mazu, Baizhang, and other noted Chan teachers (Chapters Seven and Eight); the second part is primarily concerned with delineating the institutional context in which Hongzhou School's soteriological paradigms were actually instituted and disseminated (Chapters Nine and Ten). This systematic account of the Hongzhou School should provide a clear picture of its historical growth and its place in the religious life of Tang China, and rectify some of the key misinterpretations of the doctrines and practices of the classical Chan tradition.

Chapter 1

# *Chan Literary Genres*

The study of late medieval Chan is primarily (indeed, almost exclusively) based on research of Chan documents and other relevant textual sources. Because of that, it is very important to understand the origin of Chan texts (most of which are hybrid narratives, and substantial parts of which contain obvious elements of fiction), the functions for which they were composed, and the ways in which they were used and transmitted. Careful examination of the development of Chan literature and the dating of the specific types of materials that comprise Chan texts is a preliminary stage of research that must be undertaken before there can be any serious attempt to critically examine the historical evolution of the ideas, religious practices, and institutions of this school of Chinese Buddhism. Understanding the provenance of individual Chan texts and the historical development of the literary genres in which they were composed is imperative in order to clarify the origins and defining features of the relevant primary materials, and establish the criteria for their prudent use as sources for the study of the history of Chan during the middle and late parts of the Tang dynasty. Any study of Chan that fails to critically examine the genesis, the literary structure, and the ideological/institutional contexts in which Chan texts were composed and disseminated is bound to be methodologically flawed and filled with unwarranted assumptions and inaccuracies.

The contents of the first part of the dissertation, which consists of this and the following chapter, represent an attempt to trace the development of Chan literary genres

and to examine the contents and literary structure of those early Chan text that are pertinent to the study of the history of Chan during the middle Tang period. The analysis that follows should be understood in terms of dissertation's examination of a particular period in the history of Chan Buddhism and the practical need to critically examine the provenance of the relevant textual materials, rather than as a theoretical study of medieval Chan literature or an exercise in critical analysis. Though here I am primarily interested in the use of Chan texts and other relevant documents in order to illuminate the history of Chan, assessment of their value as historical sources cannot be divorced from their ideological origins. While they serve as sources for the study of history, Chan texts are themselves products of history (a very complex one, we might add), and they have to be interpreted and understood within the social and religious contexts that produced them.

The creation of distinctive Chan genres, which was a gradual development that took place over an extended period of time, was a process of codification of discursive properties that were characteristic of the Chan School.[1] Comprehending the process that led to the creation of Chan genres and their subsequent institutionalization is of great help in understanding, to use Tzvetan Todorov's terminology, the "models of writing" utilized by the ancient authors of Chan works, as well as the "horizons of expectation" of their medieval readers.[2] Like firmly rooted social institutions, established genres transmit certain sets of religious and social attitudes by which they are shaped, and which in turn they act to have an effect on.[3] Since genres, like other institutions, are reflections of the dominant ideology and reveal the major constitutive traits and values of the social

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[1] See Tzvetan Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," *New Literary History* 8/1 (1976), p. 162.

[2] Ibid., p. 163.

[3] Heather Dubrow, *Genre*, p. 4.

groupings or religious traditions that created them, understanding the formation and function of Chan genres sheds light on the forces that shaped the historical development of the tradition(s) that produced them.[4]

Modern scholarship revealed that many of the influential texts that were traditionally accepted as normative accounts of Chan history should not be taken at face value as faithful description of Tang Chan. Hu Shi expressed doubts about the authenticity of materials included in historical chronicles such as *Jingde Chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 long time ago.[5] With some qualifications, similar concerns were also voiced by Yanagida,[6] and as noted in the Introduction, recently Foulk made the somewhat overstated argument that the "records of the transmission of the lamp" are little more then a body of religious mythology that was created in order to fulfill polemical, ritual, and didactic functions in the world of Song Chan.

Notwithstanding their relatively late dating, the main historical chronicles that were composed during the Five Dynasties and early Song periods—such as *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 and *Chuandeng lu* —were basically compilations of earlier materials, many of which were first written down during the Tang period. Discerning use of the those documents and records of sayings as sources for the study of Chan history has to take into account both points of reference: the social and religious circumstances of late Tang as

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[4] See Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," p. 162.

[5] See the beginning of Hu Shi's preface to his *Shenhui heshang yiji* 神會和尚遺集 (also reproduced in Huang Xianian 黃夏年, ed., *Hu Shi ji* 胡適集, pp. 40–42).

[6] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 226, agrees with Hu Shi's contention that there are problems with the use of Song Chan texts like SGSZ and CDL as sources for the study of early Chan. However, Yanagida also points out that earlier Chan texts from Dunhuang, which Hu Shi uncritically trusted to be reliable historical records, are as much a product of the process of creation of "false history" as the Song texts, since both groups of texts have the same origin as records of the sayings of Chan monks.

well as those of the early Song Chan. Considering the paucity of early pre-Song sources for the study of Tang Chan, it would be ill-considered to label all early Song Chan texts as mere products of Song Chan ideology and reject their use as pertinent historical sources without making any effort to carefully examine the provenance of the materials that are included in them. Sweeping characterization of them as "false histories" or mere products of Song Chan ideology neglects the circumstances of their creation, and pays insufficient attention to the sources that were used and the procedures that were adopted by their compilers.

Though it is obvious that the study of Tang Chan should be based primarily on extant Tang sources, the early Song texts also have much to tell us about Tang Chan, if they are used wisely and with great care. It is the challenge of present scholarship to scrutinize more carefully these materials and establish criteria for distinguishing elements of Chan narratives that are pertinent to the study of Tang Chan from those that are more useful for understanding the social and religious milieus of the Song Chan tradition. Once those elements from early Song texts that are based on earlier Tang sources have been identified, they should certainly be used to supplement the limited textual sources that are direct products of the Tang period.

In the next chapter, I will examine the structure of one Chan genre and try to establish the provenance of the literary formats that comprise it. In this chapter I will present a general overview of Chan literature, especially in reference to the study of Chan during the middle Tang period. I will start with a brief survey of the origins and literary features of the main Chan genres, which will be followed by an examination of few important features of Chan literature. In the final section I will review some of the early texts that are most relevant for the study of the historical development of Hongzhou

School's doctrines and practices.

## Taxonomy of Chan Literary Genres

Despite substantial progress in Chan studies since the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts during the early part of the twentieth century, the study of Chan literature is still an area where much work remains to be done. That is especially the case with the critical study of the origin and development of individual Chan literary genres. Among Japanese scholars, who have so far done most of the work on Chan literature, there seems to be no clear set of criteria for defining what constitutes a particular Chan genre, even though various terms that refer to specific genres are widely used. As a result of this dearth of clear definitions, often there is a marked lack of differentiation among different genres, and insufficient awareness of the diverse origins, contents, and formats of Chan texts that belong to them. Texts written in different genres are often mixed together as equally representative records of Chan religiosity, despite the fact that the great differences in their literary format and dating indicate that they are products of different religious milieus, and that they were composed from several types of earlier textual and oral sources that had diverse origins.[7]

One example of the tendency to blur the distinctions between different Chan genres is the use of the term "records of sayings" (*yulu* 語錄). Though the term is the name of but one Chan genre, very often it is used in broad and vague ways so that its

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[7] An example of this tendency is Judith Berling's "Bringing the Buddha Down to Earth: Notes on the Emergence of *Yü-lu* as a Buddhist Genre," *History of Religions* 27/1 (1987), pp. 56–88, the only English-language study of Chan genres. In her discussion of the evolution of the "records of sayings" (*yulu* 語錄) genre, Berling does not distinguish between different Chan genres at all. For example, CDL, which belongs to the genre of "lamp histories," and *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄, a Northern Song *gongan* 公案 collection, are both assigned to the *yulu* genre, while the *yulu* genre itself is basically reduced to only one of its elements, the encounter dialogue stories.

meaning roughly corresponds to such terms as "Chan literature" or "Chan text." An example of such poorly defined usage are the well-known *Zen no goroku* 禪の語錄 series, which consist of Japanese translations of classical Chinese Chan texts (that also include carefully edited editions of the Chinese originals).[8] Though supposedly the texts chosen for inclusion in the series are Chan "records of sayings," as the name of the series would seem to indicate, most of the series consists of translations of texts that are not records of sayings at all. The series includes collections of Hanshan's poetry and Dahui's letters, Zongmi's treatises on Chan (one of which was supposedly written as an introduction to his collection of Chan literature), Dazhu's treatise on Chan soteriology, Wumen's *gongan* collection, and a few early Chan texts that were early precursors of the "transmission of the lamp" genre. Indeed, only four out of the eighteen texts published so far that can truly be called records of sayings.

The lumping together of such diverse texts is based on the assumption that a Southern Song anthology of *gongan* literature such as *Wumen guan* 無門關, for example, is somehow alike to a late eight century treatise about Chan doctrine such as *Dunwu yaomen* 頓悟要門, to use two contrasting examples from the above series. But such a supposition is based more on blind faith in the putative uniformity of the Chan "religious experience"—assuming it is possible to postulate such a thing at all—rather that on an awareness of the historical development of Chan beliefs and practices, and clear assessment of the impact that the social milieus and institutional frameworks in which Chan writers operated exerted on their composition of Chan literature. Putting aside for the moment the possibility of an atemporal realm of pure Chan experience as the main

[8] Published by Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo. The series was originally conceived as consisting of twenty volumes, of which only eighteen were eventually published.

source of the manifold manifestations of Chan religiosity, it is quite obvious that a monk from the mid-Tang period like Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (fl. 8th century), the author of *Dunwu yaomen*, lived in quite different social environment from a late Song monk like Wumen Huikai 無門慧開 (1183–1260), the author of *Wumen guan*. The two also upheld quite distinct sets of religious beliefs and ideas, as well as different conceptions of the Chan tradition, even though Wumen considered himself to be a spiritual descendant of the same tradition to which Dazhu belonged. The different social and religious contexts in which these monks functioned is reflected, among other things, in the great difference between the literary formats and the contents of the texts they wrote, which express quite dissimilar ideas about Chan doctrine and practice.

The historical development of Chan literature, which included the formation of distinctive genres, was a drawn out and complex process that took place gradually and over an extended period. It started during the early Tang period, and culminated during the Northern Song dynasty with the compilation of a number of influential texts that until recently were widely used as the main sources for the study of Chan history. But it was only during the early Song period that the Chan School developed distinctly defined literary genres with more-or-less clearly codified discursive properties that were accepted by both the Chan writers and their medieval audiences. Some of the Chan genres listed in the below did have a long history of development that began during the early Tang period, but the variations in form and contents among the Tang texts that were predecessors of these genres do not, in my view, make it possible until the tenth century to speak of fully developed Chan genres that were widely diffused among the monastic elite and their educated lay followers.

As we look at the Chan texts that were compiled during the Five Dynasties and

early Song periods, we can distinguish at least the following four genres:

1) Transmission of the lamp chronicles (*chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄), also referred to by Japanese scholars as "lamp histories" (*tōshi* 燈史)
2) Records of sayings (*yulu* 語錄)
3) Manuals of monastic life and discipline, i.e. texts about the so-called "rules of purity" (*qinggui* 清規) associated with Baizhang
4) *Gongan* 公案 collections.

Though all of these four genres reached their fully developed form during the Northern Song, the first two, the transmission of the lamp histories and the records of sayings, had long histories of development that predated the Song. On the other hand, the last two, the manuals of monastic life and discipline and the *gongan* collections, can best be regarded as distinctive products of Song dynasty Chan.

One of the rare classification of Chan literature according to texts' contents and format is *Zensekishi* 禪籍志, compiled by Gitai 義諦 (fl. 1693–1716) during the early part of the Edo period (1615–1867) in Japan.[9] Although the criteria chosen by Gitai are not always clear—he shows no unambiguous awareness of the concept of literary genre—and his work includes texts that are from a much longer period than the one presently under discussion and also includes some texts that have no clear connection with Chan, Gitai's categorization in some ways resembles the one presented above. The categories introduced by him are:

1) collections of *gongan* (*hadan kōan* 把斷公案)
2) comprehensive histories of Chan (*shūmon zenshi* 宗門全書)
3) texts about monastic rituals and rules (*sōrin raihan* 叢林禮範)

[9] *Zensekishi* 禪籍志, in *Dainihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書, vol. 1, pp. 271–320.

4) individual Chan records (*tanroku zenyō* 單錄禪要)

5) abridged histories of Chan (*shūmon ryakushi* 宗門略史)

6) general histories of Chan and the teachings (*zen-kyōsōshi* 禪教總史)

7) Chan collections of miscellaneous writings (*shūmon zuihitsu* 宗門隨筆)

8) texts that combine Chan and the teachings (*zen-kyōzassetsu* 禪教雜說)

9) commentaries of scriptures written by Chan teachers (*shūshi chūkyō* 宗師註經)

10) miscellaneous texts that have not been included in any of the above categories (*shūi* 拾遺).

The first three categories correspond to the genres number four, one, and three, respectively, presented above. Interestingly enough, Gitai does not have a category that corresponds to the records of sayings genre.

Before presenting a more detailed description of each the four main Chan literary genres identified above, I should clarify the criteria used for identifying texts as belonging to a particular "Chan genre," and make clear what distinguishes them from other documents that are not labeled as "Chan texts." Obviously, literary works that belong to the four categories listed above are not the only sources for the study of late Tang Chan. Examples of other relevant sources that were not direct products of the Chan School include stele inscriptions for Chan monks written by noted officials and literati, collections of biographies of eminent monks, such as *Song gaoseng zhuan*, and the poems and prose writings of Tang literati, which directly or indirectly provide information about Chan.

What unites the texts in all of the above four genres as products of the Chan School is the fact that their authors or compilers were closely associated with—certainly in the eyes of their disciples and followers, but probably in their own eyes as well— a

Chan lineage that regarded Bodhidharma (d. 532?) and Huineng 慧能 (638–713) as its common ancestors, either as members of that lineage or as disciples of well-know members. Moreover, although closely related to other Buddhist genres (although that is less so in the case of the *gongan* collections), all four of the above genres possess distinctive literary features (described below) that were only developed and popularized by the Chan School. Finally, in terms of their ideological orientation, texts that belong to any of the above four genres present the Chan School as the orthodox tradition of Buddhism and the Chan teachers as the rightful heirs of the Buddha's enlightenment.

If, for example, we compare *Chuandeng lu* and *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the first can be considered a Chan text and the second cannot because of differences in terms of: their (1) authorship, (2) literary structure, and (3) ideological orientation. These differences can be summarized as follows:

1) Daoyuan 道原 (d.u.), the author of *Chuandeng lu*, was considered to be a member of the Chan lineage, while Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), the author of *Song gaoseng zhuan*, was not;
2) Daoyuan's work possess literary features that are peculiar to the transmission of the lamp genre that was developed by the Chan School, while Zanning's work belongs to a Chinese Buddhist genre that predates the emergence of Chan, the collections of biographies of eminent monks, whose earlier predecessors were *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, compiled by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), and *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, compiled by Daoxuan 道宣(596–667);
3) *Chuandeng lu* was written in order to lend support to the Chan School's claim of orthodoxy and religious superiority vis-à-vis the other schools of Chinese Buddhism, while in *Song gaoseng zhuan* monks who are identified as members of

the Chan lineage are treated on a par with other monks not associated with this lineage.

Concerning the last point, in *Song gaoseng zhuan* the category to which most biographies of Chan monks are assigned, "practitioners of *chan*" (*xichan* 習禪, "chan" here meaning meditation), also includes monks not associated with the Chan School, while the biographies of some monks who were widely perceived to be members of the Chan lineage are placed in other categories. One such example is the biography of Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975), which is placed in the category of "promoters of meritorious works" (*xingfu* 興福), even though during his life Yanshou was the best-known member of the Fayan lineage of Chan.[10] Thus, although Zanning recognized the Chan School as a distinct tradition of Chinese Buddhism, association with it was not the primary criterion he used when he wanted to broadly characterize the religious career of a particular monk for inclusion in one of the ten categories of eminent monks presented in his work. In contrast to Zanning's subordination of lineage affiliation as a defining characteristic of religious life, in Chan texts such as *Chuandeng lu* it was above all membership in the Chan lineage that defined the religious identity of individual monks. There the narratives of Chan monks' lives and religious activities were structured in ways that reflected the centrality of notions of lineage construction in Song Chan ideology.

## Outline of Four Genres

A detailed examination of the origins and subsequent development of each Chan genre is beyond the scope of the present work. Nevertheless, for the purpose of the present discussion, in this section I will briefly outline each of the four Chan genres introduced in

[10] SGSC 28, T 50.887b.

the previous section, and then present a short summary of the different types of literary formats that comprise each genre.

***Transmission of the Lamp Chronicles***. The transmission of the lamp chronicles consist of hagiographies of the Indian and Chinese Chan patriarchs. In their fully developed form these texts usually begin with a brief introductory section about the seven mythic Buddhas of antiquity and a hagiography of Buddha Śākyamuni. These are followed by the hagiographies of the putative Indian and Chinese patriarchs, after which come the hagiographies of all well-known Chan teachers up to those who were active at the time of compilation. The hagiographies are composed of a variety of materials, the most common of which are biographical sketches, dialogues, short sermons, and poems. The format of the transmission of the lamp texts resembles Chinese clan/family genealogies, with the hagiographies of individual Chan teachers arranged in lineages of transmission that resemble genealogical trees. The "family tree" represented in these texts is that of the Buddhas and patriarchs (*fozu* 佛祖), with Buddha Śākyamuni and the seven Buddhas of antiquity at its root.

In the transmission of the lamp chronicles the records of the words and deeds of individual masters are connected together by their common participation in the ancestral transmission of Chan. This common line, which connects together all the discrete hagiographies that comprise the whole text, is not strongly asserted in an explicit manner. Instead, it is imbedded in the peculiar literary structure of the text, which functions as a form of spiritual genealogy. The best known text composed in this genre is *Jingde Chuandeng lu* (Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), the earliest of the five "transmission of the lamp records" compiled during the Song period (960–1279).[11]

[11]T 51.196b–467a. The other four are: *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* (hereafter abbreviated as TGDL),

This text was compiled by Daoyuan in 1004, and was subsequently re-edited and revised by Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), Li Wei 李維, and others.[12]

The evolution of the transmission of the lamp genre can be traced back to some of the early Chan texts that were found among the Dunhuang documents. Early proto-sectarian documents that attempted to establish the legitimacy of a particular Chan lineage, such as *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記, compiled by Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750),[13] and *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記,[14] can be considered as early prototypes of the Song transmission of the lamp texts. However, these early texts lack the broad and relatively

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compiled in 1029 (XZJ 135.298–451), *Jianzhong jingguo xudeng lu* 建中靖國續燈錄 (XZJ 136.1–207), [*Zongmen*] *liandeng huiyao* [宗門] 聯燈會要 (XZJ 136.208–475), *Jiaqin pudeng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (XZJ 137.1–219).

[12] For a brief hagiographic excerpt about Daoyuan, see TGDL 27, XZJ 135.437a-b. For his life and work see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, pp. 29–30. Since the original text of CDL that was compiled by Daoyuan is no longer extant, we cannot be sure about the extent of the changes introduced in the revised edition. Ishii has marshaled some evidence which indicates that the changes might have been significant, and could have led to the creation of a work that was much more sectarian than the one originally envisioned by Daoyuan. Unlike Daoyuan, who as a member of the Fayan lineage espoused tolerant views similar to those expressed beforehand by Zongmi and Yanshou, the two main editors who produced the currently-available edition of CDL were associated with the Linji lineage, which at that time had strong sectarian predilections and was the main exponent of the notion that Chan was a separate transmission of the essence of Buddhism that was superior to the other Buddhist traditions. See Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, pp. 8–25. The introduction of changes in the later editions of CDL under the influence of the development of the sectarian milieu during the early Song is also noted in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 477–78.

[13] T 85.1283c–90c. For a study of this work, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū* 初期禪宗史書の研究, and for a Japanese translation, see Yanagida, *Shoki no zenshi I: Ryōga shijiki, Den hōbōki* 初期の禪史I: 楞伽師資記。傳法寶紀, pp. 49–326.

[14] T 51.179–196. For an extensive study of this text see Yanagida's *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 278–334, and "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi* and the Chan Doctrine of Sudden Awakening," (translated by Carl W. Bielefeldt), in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, pp. 13–49. Yanagida has also published a Japanese translation of this text in *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki* 初期の禪史II: 歷代法寶記, pp. 39–324. Also dealing with this text is Wendi Adamek's Stanford University dissertation, "Issues in Chinese Buddhist Transmission as Seen Through the Lidai fabao ji (Record of the Dharma-Jewel Through the Ages)."

ecumenical coverage evidenced in *Chuandeng lu*, in which all Chan lineages that trace back their origins to Huineng are considered to be equally authentic, and which also includes lineages that by the Song were defunct and widely recognized as collateral. On the contrary, the earlier texts, which are much smaller than the Song chronicles in both length and scope, include only the Chan patriarchs of a singular line of transmission that their authors attempted to establish as the orthodox one.[15]

The appearance of an open ecumenical attitude that primarily manifested itself as willingness to acknowledge different Chan lineages as legitimate successors of Bodhidharma can already be discerned in the two most important prototypes of the Song histories, the *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳, compiled in 801,[16] and the *Zutang ji*, compiled in 952 in the area of present-day Fujian province by two little-known monks known as Jing 靜 and Yun 筠.[17] Indeed, *Zutang ji* can be considered to be the earliest example of a text that incorporates all elements of the mature transmission of the lamp genre.

***Records of Sayings.*** The earliest extant appearance of the term "record of sayings" can be found in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which under imperial commission was

[15] For example, the author of *Lengqie shizi ji* tried to establish the lineage of Shenxiu as the orthodox one, while *Lidai fabao ji* was compiled to legitimize the lineage of the Baotang 保唐 tradition from Sichuan, which was headed by Wuzhu 無住 (714–774).

[16] Text in Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Sōzō ichin Hōrinden, Dentōgyokuei shū* 宋藏遺珍寶林傳, 傳燈玉英集. Unfortunately, the sections of BLZ that are most relevant the present study—fascicles 9 and 10, which cover the first two generations of Chan masters after Huineng—are no longer extant. Nevertheless, quotations from these two fascicles found in later texts have enabled Japanese scholars to obtain general idea about their contents. For the missing chapters of BLZ, see Shiina Kōyū's 椎名宏雄 two articles, "*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū" 寶林傳逸文の研究, KDBR 11 (1980), pp. 234–57, and "*Hōrinden* makikyū makijū no itsubun" 寶林傳卷九卷十の逸文, SK 22 (1980), pp. 191–98. The sources for identifying quotations from the lost fascicles of BLZ are listed in "*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū" p. 238.

[17] For studies of the compilation of this text, see Shiina Kōyū, "*Sodōshū* no hensei" 祖堂集の編成, SK 21 (1979), pp. 66–72, and Yanagida Seizan, "*Sodōshū* no shiryō kachi" 祖堂集の資料價值,

compiled by Zanning between 987 and 988.[18] These references are rather late, and there is no historical evidence that the term *yulu* was used during the Tang. Like the transmission of the lamp chronicles, the fully developed form of the *yulu* genre was a product of the early Song. Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence about the use of similar terms in the titles of Tang texts, some of which were the earliest prototypes of the records of sayings texts compiled during the Song dynasty. Examples of classical models for the records of sayings include such earlier Tang texts as the *Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經 (Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch) and Shenhui's *Tanyu* 壇語 (Platform Sayings).[19] Both of these texts incorporate the major elements of the early Song records of sayings texts, such as biographical sketches, sermons, and dialogues.[20] Moreover, there are numerous texts involving records of the sayings of Tang Chan monks that are no longer extant, but whose titles are listed in catalogues compiled during the Tang. These include the titles of Chan texts found in Ennin's 圓仁 (799–852) and Enchin's 圓珍 (814–891) catalogues of texts they brought back to Japan from China.[21]

In his extensive study of the history of the "recorded sayings," Yanagida Seizan points out that before the Song there were five such terms used to denote texts that

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ZK 44 (1953), pp. 31–79 (article published under his original surname Yokoi 横井).

[18] There the term appears twice, in the hagiographies of Huangbo and Zhaozhou 趙州 (778–889). In Huangbo's hagiography there is the statement that "his record of sayings circulated throughout the world" (T 50.842c23). Similarly, in Zhaozhou's hagiography it is stated that "His record of sayings was widely circulated and was esteemed by the world" (T 50.775c17–8). See also Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 229, and "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Chan Buddhism," p. 185.

[19] For an English translation of the Dunhuang version of *Liuzu tanjing*, see Philip B Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, pp. 125–83.

[20] See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 390–97, 417–25.

[21] For listing of some of the Chan titles found in Ennin's catalogues, see T 55.1095a, and T 55.1106c. For a convenient listing of all Chan titles that appear in Enchin's two catalogues, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 330–32.

belonged to this genre: sayings texts (*yuben* 語本), oral teachings (*yanjiao* 言教), specific records (*bielu* 別錄), extensive sayings (*guangyu* 廣語), and sayings (*yu* 語).[22] While Yanagida's discussion about the provenance of these terms and the ways they were used during the Tang at times tends towards conjecture, he does present sufficient evidence to show that by the early ninth century there were number of text that recorded the sayings of Chan teachers. These records probably mainly consisted of transcriptions of sermons, and they might have also included some transcribed dialogues between Chan teachers and their disciples. As all of the above terms appear in texts associated with the Hongzhou School, that has lead Yanagida to speculate that the records of sayings genre was developed by the Hongzhou School.[23]

The early Song records of sayings were written as inclusive records of the life and teaching of a particular Chan teacher. They drew on a variety of materials about a particular Chan monk that were available at the time of their compilation, such as biographical information, sermons, records of dialogues and other stories that express his interaction with his disciples, and occasionally some poems. Present Chan scholarship has for the most part glossed over the composite nature of these texts, and the differences between the literary formats of the distinctive parts that comprise them. The usual assumption—shared by both modern and traditional scholars—is that there is no essential difference between the various parts that comprise these texts, and that all records of

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[22] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 229–46. The translations of these terms are adopted from John McRae's English summary of this article, "Yanagida Seizan's Landmark Works on Chinese Chan," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 7 (1993–94), pp. 82–84.

[23] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 458, 465–66. According to Yanagida, having a *yuben* was supposedly a major requirement for Mazu's disciples, and the main reason why a number of monks who had no strong connection with Mazu came to be considered his disciples was that they had a *yuben*. This assumption is pure conjecture at best, as there is no credible evidence to support it.

Chan teachers' acts, both verbal and otherwise, are equally authentic accounts of their enlightened activity. In the next chapter I will challenge these assumptions, and take a close look at the contents of the records of sayings and the history of the textual materials that comprise them.

***Manuals of Monastic Life***. The Chan monastic codes are popularly known as "rules of purity" (*qinggui* 清規). The oldest text associated with this corpus is the brief and somewhat ambiguous *Chanmen guishi* 禪門規式, which is appended to Baizhang's hagiography in *Chuandeng lu*.[24] Another edition of the same text is also included in *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, compiled by Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗賾 in 1103, which is the oldest extant Chan monastic code.[25] Previous scholars assumed that all texts that belong to this genre trace their origins to an early Hongzhou text called *Baizhang qinggui* 百丈清規 (Baizhang's Rules of Purity), which was supposedly lost. This text, we are told, recorded the monastic rules established by Baizhang, which were subsequently adopted by monastic communities associated with the Chan lineage. By the early Song the image of Baizhang as the founder of distinctive Chan monasticism became an important motif in Chan lore and a potent symbol for partisans who promoted construction of a distinct sectarian Chan identity. It was precisely this tradition, later integrated into the ideology of the Japanese Zen sects, that for the most part shaped the directions of research into the putative tradition of distinctive "Chan monasticism."

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[24] CDL 6, T 51.250c–51b; part of the text is also quoted in Baizhang's biography in SGSZ, T 50.770c–71a. For English translations, accompanied with studies of its provenance and contents, see Foulk, "The Ch'an School and its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," p. 328–83, and Martin Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule: *Ch'ing kuei* and the shaping of Ch'an Community Life," in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, pp. 173–78.

[25] XZJ 111.438–71. For a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering, see Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆, et al., *Zennen shingi: yakuchū* 譯註—禪苑清規.

The existence of a long-lost ninth century text about Chan monastic rules that was authored or inspired by Baizhang, often referred to by Japanese scholars as "The Old Rules of Baizhang" ("Hyakujō ko shingi" 百丈古清規), is still accepted by influential Japanese scholars like Yanagida and Suzuki Tetsuo, for whom the creation of distinctive Chan rules was an expression of the independent spirit of Mazu's new Buddhism.[26] I will discuss the various issues related to the emergence of Chan monastic rules in Chapter Nine of the present work. Here I need only to note that, as recent studies have strongly suggested, it is very unlikely that such text ever existed or that Baizhang was in any way directly involved in the creation of a set of monastic rules.[27] For that and other reasons that will be discussed later, it seems better to consider these texts as products of Song dynasty Buddhism that are of only secondary relevance to the study of Tang dynasty Chan.

**Gongan *Collections*.** The *gongan* collections were first developed during the Northern Song dynasty. Texts belonging to this genre are formed around brief stories taken from the transmission of the lamp chronicles and the records of sayings of the great Tang teachers, or in rare cases from short passages excerpted from the Buddhist scriptures. These stories form the core of the *gongan* collections, to which are added

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[26] See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 250, 472, and Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄, *Tō-godai no zenshū* 唐五代の禪宗, pp. 142–43.

[27] See Ishii Shūdō, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū" 百丈清規の研究, *Komazawa daigaku zenkenkyūjo nenbō* 6 (1995), p. 53. Though Ishii rejects the view that Baizhang was directly involved in the creation of a system of monastic rules, he still cannot completely let go of traditional views and deny any role to Baizhang in the evolution of Chan monasticism. Basing himself on a brief and ambiguous passage in Baizhang's stele, Ishii asserts that although Baizhang was not personally involved in the creation of specific Chan monastic code and some monastic rules were gradually codified only by the later generations of abbots at Baizhang mountain, it was Baizhang himself who introduced the Chan code's spirit of communal labor and the compromising attitude that tried to accommodate elements from both the Mahayana and Hīnayāna traditions.

layers of notes, interlinear comments, commentaries, and sub-commentaries written by distinguished Song Chan teachers, presented in both verse and prose formats. The best-known examples of this type of texts are Yuanwu's 圜悟 (1063–1135) *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄 (Blue Cliff record)[28] and the already-mentioned *Wumen guan*.[29]

Although the *gongan* collections have often been regarded as primers for *kanhua* 看話 Chan practice that developed during the Northern Song dynasty, it seems more prudent to interpret the genesis of this genre in the light of the complex interactions between Song Chan teachers and literati. Some of the earlier products of this genre, especially the *Biyan lu*, are characterized by very complex narrative structure, elegant language, and profuse use of literary metaphors. Considering the complexity and sophistication of their literary configuration and their frequent use of difficult and obscure terminology, the understanding of which required a classical education not available to most monks during the Song (or even to all members of the monastic elite that congregated in Chan monasteries), it is difficult to see what their role could have been in the kind of simple and straightforward meditative practice developed by Dahui 大慧 (1089–1163), the leading exponent of *kanhua* Chan.[30]

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[28] T 48.139–225. For an English translation, see Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary, trans. *The Blue Cliff Record*.

[29] T 48.292–99.

[30] For the practice of *kanhua* Chan, see Robert E. Buswell, "The 'Short-cut' Approach of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 343–56. Song *kanhua* meditative praxis only used few of the core cases found in the *gongan* collections, which were culled from earlier Chan texts and comprised only a small part of the whole collections. The main cases themselves, being simply brief quotations from earlier works, were not the fundamental parts of *gongan* literature. Rather, the original parts were the verse and prose comments written by their Song authors, which comprised by far the largest part of the texts, and which were the defining feature of this genre.

## Genre Codification

The codification of each of the four Chan genre described above was the result of a prolonged process that involved the transformation—through combination, displacement, or inversion—of one or more earlier genres.[31] By combining elements from earlier textual traditions, and by introducing new models of narrative structure, the Chan School developed original types of literature that reflected its continuously evolving religious and institutional concerns. The basic types of literary formats, the specific combinations and adaptations of which led to the creation of the genres introduces here, can summarized by the Table 1 presented on the next page.

As can be seen from the table, there is considerable correspondence and overlap between the types of writings included in the first two genres, the transmission of the lamp chronicles and the records of sayings. This is no coincidence, since individual texts that belong to both genres used much the same types of materials, albeit in a somewhat different way. On the other hand, the last two genres are composed of quite different types of materials, which reflect the different purposes for which they were written. As the texts that belong to the last two genres bear no direct relevance to the Chan tradition of the period covered by the present study, in the following sections I will focus my attention on the first two genres.

[31] See Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," p. 161.

Table 1. The composition of Chan genres

| Type of lit. / Genre → ↓ | Lamp Histories | Records of Sayings | Monastic Manuals | *Gongan* Collections |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| biog. information | yes | yes | no | very little[32] |
| sermons | some | yes | no | no[33] |
| dialogues | yes | yes | no | yes |
| poetry | some | some | very few | yes |
| monastic rules | no[34] | no | yes | no |
| supernatural stories | few | few | no | no |
| meditation instructions | no[35] | no | some | no |
| instructions about rites | no | no | yes | no |
| commentary | very little | very little | no | yes |

Although Chan monastic manuals and *gongan* collections are not directly relevant to the historical study of Hongzhou Chan, they cannot be completely ignored by anyone studying Tang Chan because both traditional and contemporary scholarly views about it

[32] Though usually these kinds of texts are not concerned with the biographies of Chan monks, the commentaries on individual *gongan*'s in *Biyan lu* occasionally do include brief references to biographical data.

[33] The colophon at the beginning of *Biyan lu* refers to the texts as *yuyao* 語要 ("a summary of sayings," or "saying's essentials"), which could be interpreted as an indication that Yuanwu's commentaries on the original *gongan*'s and on Xuedou's verses were originally presented as sermons. Nonetheless, as their language and literary structure indicate the commentaries are obviously literary creations, and it is more appropriate to place them in that category.

[34] The only exception is the end of fascicle six of CDL (p. 117), which contains the brief (one-page only) *Chanmen guishi*, the previously-noted text about Chan monastic life that is appended to Baizhang's biography.

[35] There are occasional examples of brief literary pieces that might be interpreted as meditation instructions of some sorts. One such example is the short *Zuochan zhen* 坐禪箴 (Admonishment about Sitting Meditation) by Wuyun of Hangzhou 杭州五雲 (CDL 30.632). Nonetheless, though this short work offers interpretation about the meaning of mediation practice and the attitude with which it should be approached, it is not, strictly spiking, a straightforward example of the sets of instructions that are usually found in meditation manuals.

are heavily influenced by views based on uncritical readings and interpretations of texts that belong to these two genres. For example, the prevalent views about the origin of unique Chan monastic life within the Hongzhou School are to a large extent based on the reading of Chan monastic manuals. In the same manner, the equally common views about the origin of the encounter dialogue format with the Hongzhou School are closely related to the great popularity of the *gongan* collections, and to the continuing influence of the Chan traditions that were shaped by them—Song *kanhua* Chan and Japanese Rinzai Zen, for example—on the interpretation of the doctrines and practices of middle and late Tang Chan.

**Issues in the Study of Chan Literature**

While it is useful to distinguish between the above genres for the purpose of establishing the provenance Chan texts and their functions in the world of late medieval Chinese Buddhism, we also need to be aware of the extensive overlap between different genres. As was noted already, that is especially the case with the two genres whose development started during the Tang, the transmission of the lamp chronicles and the records of sayings. Much of the material that forms the records of sayings of individual Chan teachers can also be found in their individual biographies in the transmission of the lamp chronicles. This is an indication of either direct borrowing between texts that belong to the two genres, or of their utilization of the same primary materials. The lamp chronicles and the records of sayings are thus basically composed of the same basic materials, of which most important are biographical sketches, transcripts of sermons, and stories that feature encounter dialogues, the third category being the best-known and most representative of both genres. In addition, they both sometimes contain poems, or an occasional story that features thaumaturgic elements. Because of these similarities, the

two types of texts are often not clearly differentiated, and the transmission of the lamp chronicles are simply taken as belonging to an all-inclusive and vaguely defined category of Chan records of sayings.

It is possible to say that in terms of their basic contents the transmission of the lamp chronicles are compilations of abbreviated records of sayings of individual masters, organized in genealogical form according to a conception of Chan lineage of ancestral transmission. Yet, despite their use of similar materials, the two genres have distinct literary structures, which point to different sets of concerns and issues that shaped the long history of their development into distinctive genres. Many of the records of sayings developed from the early *yuben* of Chan monks compiled during the Tang, to which subsequently were added additional layers of materials. The best examples of early models that survive in editions that are close to their Tang originals are Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao* 傳心法要 and Baizhang's *Baizhang guanglu* 百丈廣錄.[36] Other early models that are still extant include the twelve records of noted Chan teachers from the

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[36] *Baizhang Guanglu*, which contains numerous sermons of Mazu's best-known disciple, is one of the longest records of Chan teachings from the mid-Tang period. Confirmation of the compilation of Baizhang's *yuben* can be found in his stele, which was written by Zhen Xu 陳詡 shortly after his passing away. Baizhang's record is one of the most important sources for the study of Hongzhou Chan, and it contains perhaps the clearest descriptions of Hongzhou school's ideas about religious practice and realization, including its conception of the stages of sanctification and the nature of the Chan realization of truth. More information about this text will be presented in Chapters Seven and Eight.

Together with Baizhang's text, Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao* is one of the major sources for the study of late Tang Chan beliefs and practices. The text comprises two separate records, which were compiled by Pei Xiu in 858 based on transcripts of sermons and conversation that he personally recorded in 843 and 848, when he held an official post in the South. Huangbo's records are among the most important documents about the defining features of ninth-century Chan soteriology, and about the evolution of the Chan attitudes towards traditional Buddhist practices and scriptural authority. The text contains numerous passages that shed light on such topics as Chan's conceptions of mind and the nature of Buddhahood, its understanding of religious faith, and the practice/realization of no-mind

Tang and Five Dynasties periods that form fascicle twenty-eight of *Chuandeng lu*.[37] Texts of this kind, of which unfortunately not many Tang specimens survive, are essentially edited transcripts of the teachings of famous Chan monks that are primarily presented in the format of sermons and short addresses, which are occasionally delivered in response to questions from the audience.

Baizhang's and Huangbo's records are usually regarded as early products of the *yulu* genre, which is how Yanagida treats them in his study of the history of Chan literature.[38] However, unlike texts in the *yulu* genre composed during the Song period, these two texts possess certain stylistic features that set them apart from later *yulu* texts. For example, both texts lack the kind of biographical information that is usually an integral part of the *yulu* texts. Both texts also lack iconoclastic dialogues, which are the literary format that is considered to be the defining feature of *yulu* texts. Both Baizhang's and Huangbo's records are essentially collections of transcribed sermons. Although they also include some dialogues, these dialogues are of a very different kind than the encounter dialogue stories found in such Song *yulu* collections as *Mazu yulu* and *Linji yulu*. Unlike the pithy exchanges found in late *yulu* texts, which often feature depictions of eccentric or iconoclastic behavior, the dialogues found in these two texts represent examples of traditional Buddhist discourse, which aim to elucidate various points of

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(*wuxin* 無心).

[37] CDL 28.575–601. The twelve monks whose early records are included there are: Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775), Shenhui, Mazu, Yaoshan Weiyan 藥山惟儼 (745–828), Dazhu, Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821), Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–834), Zhaozhou Zongshen 趙州從諗 (778–897), Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866), Xuansha Shibei 玄沙師備 (835–908), Lohan Guichen 羅漢桂琛 (867–928), and Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958). Among them, monks associated with the Hongzhou school clearly predominate.

[38] See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 537–58.

Buddhist/Chan beliefs, doctrines, and practices. The following two examples, one from each text, illustrate this point.

> Question: "Falsehood can hinder one's mind. Yet, we do not know how one can now get rid of falsehood." The master [Huangbo] said, "Giving rise to falsehood, [as well as] getting rid of falsehood, in the end they both lead to falsehood. Falsehood is essentially without roots—it exists only because of discrimination. If you can only extinguish the opposing feelings of ordinary and holy, naturally there will be no falsehood..."[39]

> Question: "Like now, having become a monk and having received the precepts, if one had purified one's physical and verbal acts, and if one had already completed all teaching, will such a person obtain liberation?" The master [Baizhang] said, "He will obtain a little bit of liberation, but he will not obtain the liberation of mind and the liberation of all places." Question: "What are liberation of mind and liberation of all places?" The master said, "Not seeking the Buddha, not seeking the Dharma, not seeking the Sangha, not even seeking blessings, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and so on, one should obliterate the feelings of defilement and purity, and should also not hold on to this not-seeking as being correct...." (the answer continues along this lines, turning into a short sermon).[40]

Going back to the records of sayings, essentially they are collections of all records about a particular monk that were put together with the aim to present a compelling picture of his life and teachings. For the most part earlier texts of this type do not display many traces of a strong sectarian consciousness. Though the transmission of the lamp chronicles for the most part use the same materials as the records of sayings, the biographies of individual Chan teachers are presented within the overall narrative of the transmission of Chan, which includes both historical and mythic dimensions. The biography of each Chan teacher is integrated in the continuous narrative about the putative "history" of the ancestral lineage of Chan, and the worth and importance of the religious life and teachings of each individual are concomitant with his participation in the larger process of

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[39] *Huangboshan Duanji chanshi chuanxin fayao* 黃檗山斷際禪師傳心法要, T 48.383a.

[40] BGL (*Sijia yulu* ed.), XZJ 119.411c.

the transmission of the essence of Chan enlightenment. The literary construction of fictive ancestral lineages, presented in the genealogical form that is representative of these texts, helped reinforce awareness of real or imagined spiritual families.

To a certain extent, this development was probably a reflection of the ritual constructions of ancestral structures in the daily liturgical life of medieval monastic communities. At the same time, the rigid presentations of genealogical lineages found in transmission of the lamp texts were probably as much a reflection of the demands of literary form as they were statements about the actual importance of ancestral lineage in the lives of Chan monks during the middle and late Tang periods. The genealogical format in which individual biographies are arranged is, above all, an efficient literary tool for the organization of the hagiographic materials pertaining to individual Chan monks into an orderly and practical book format. Considering the large volume of Chan collections like *Chuandeng lu*—which contains biographies or shorter entries for 1,701 individual Chan teachers, presented in thirty fascicles that occupy 274 pages in the Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon—the genealogical format is a remarkably efficient way to organize the materials. If, for example, one were to look for the biography of Mazu's disciple Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821), finding it would not be difficult once the simple organizing principle of the text is understood.[41] Since the position of Wuye's biography in the text is determined by his link with Mazu, one immediately knows where to look for it: his biography will be among the biographies of Mazu's disciples that immediately follow Mazu's biography (which is at the beginning of fascicle six). The use of a single clearly defined criterion for the arrangement of its materials makes the individual biographies in *Chuandeng lu* much easier to locate than the biographies in

[41] See CDL 8.131–32.

*Song gaoseng zhuan*. In the later text, each biography is placed in one of the ten categories of eminent monks according to broadly defined selection process that in many cases involves elements of arbitrariness, and finding one's way around this work is much more difficult and time consuming.

The literary construction of the genealogies of "Chan patriarchs" found in the transmission of the lamp chronicles was to a large extent a product of the rise of proto-sectarian consciousness within the Chan School. After during the Northern Song period texts of this genre were widely accepted as normative records of Chan's ancestral "history," they further reinforced the ritual construction of ancestral lineages that became the hallmark of Chan ideology. At the same time, the conception of ancestral lineage found in these texts, as well as the later sectarian conceptions of Chan as a unique transmission of the essence of Buddhism that drew their authority from these same texts, were read back into the Tang period. Thus, what we have is an extended process that involved: (1) literary construction of spiritual ancestry, which was used as a defining feature of a new literary genre, which then (2) influenced the ritual construction of spiritual families, the existence of which (3) was retroactively read back into the mid-Tang period, and (4) construed as a defining feature of classical Chan's religious beliefs and practices.

Thus, although the compilers of Chan texts that belong to the transmission of the lamp and the records of sayings genres drew on roughly the same body of materials about the Tang Chan teachers, their evolution as separate genres was the outcome of a confluence of historical and religious developments within the Chan School. By examining the historical evolution, structure, and contents of the genre usually considered to be paradigmatic of the Hongzhou School's literary output, the records of sayings, in the

next chapter I will attempt to explain the origins and transformations of the most popular materials that purport to portray the history and teachings of the Hongzhou School, and try to establish the authenticity of those materials as sources of historical data. Once we obtain a better knowledge of the texts themselves, then we will be in a better position to use them in constructive ways so that we can obtain a more accurate and balanced understanding of the Chan School during the Tang and its place in the Chinese society of that period. Before attempting to do that, however, in the following section I will briefly examine an important feature that is characteristic of both the transmission of the lamp histories and the records of sayings—the extensive use of biographical narratives to record the history of the Chan tradition.

### Chan Biographies in Relation to Other Biographical Writing

As it was the case with the official dynastic histories, the Imperial court commissioned many of the important Buddhist historical works that were written during the late medieval period. A prominent example of an imperially-commissioned work was Zanning's *Song gaoseng zhuan,* the compilation of which was promulgated by an imperial decree issued in 982 by Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997) of the Song dynasty.[42] Other works—such as Daoyuan's *Chuandeng lu*, the most influential Chan "history"—were compiled with the intention of submitting them to the emperor, and were subsequently included in the Buddhist canon by imperial decree.[43] Because these works were requisitioned by the court or were composed with the intention of being submitted

[42] The text was completed and presented to the Emperor in 988 (see T 50.709a-b).

[43] CDL was initially compiled by Daoyuan, who presented it to Emperor Zhenzong 眞宗 (r. 997–1022) in 1004. Under imperial decree, the text was revised by Yang Yi, Li Wei, and others, and was subsequently included in the Buddhist canon. See Yang Yi's preface in T 51.196b–97c.

to the emperor, they absorbed much of the culture of Chinese state-sponsored writing. The court-oriented outlook of their Buddhist compilers caused them to look to the traditions and conventions of official historical writing as models for their recording of the history of Buddhism. Consequently, the mainstream tradition of historical writing greatly influenced the Buddhist writers' and editors' choice of literary styles and use of sources, as well as their general attitudes towards writing.

Although the Chan biographical records were products of the Chan milieu and were informed by the internal dynamics of Chan's religious, historical, and institutional developments, to a large degree they were also influenced by the Chinese tradition of biographical writing which predated the introduction of Buddhism to China, which was an important part of Tang and Song intellectuals' literary concerns. Many of the distinguishing features of secular Chinese biographical writing also characterize Chan biographical narratives, and what are often considered to be defining features of Chan narratives are in fact little more then reworking of earlier secular or traditional Buddhist models. That is noticeably the case with the *liezhuan* 列傳 style of biographical writing—which after its appearance in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 (Historical Records) during the Former Han dynasty 前漢 (206 BC–24 AD) became the literary norm of biographical writing—whose influence on the construction of Chan biographies (that in part came via other types of Buddhist writing) is unmistakably clear.

With their origin as official historical records of the Buddhist religion (especially as practiced among the members of the monastic elite), many Buddhist historical works were compiled in a way that was remarkably similar to that of the official dynastic histories and other similar types of historical texts. Rather than engaging in literary composition, Buddhist historians like Zanning and Daoyuan were engaged in a process of

selecting, abstracting, and editing materials that came from earlier sources.[44] Though earlier Chan sources were often abridged and edited, they were usually left pretty much as they originally appeared in the earlier texts. A concrete example of this kind is Mazu's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which was based on two inscriptions composed by Quan Deyu 權德輿(759–818) and Bao Ji 包佶(d.u.). While there is no first-hand information about the sources that were used by Daoyuan when he composed Mazu's biography in *Chuandeng lu*, virtually all of its contents appeared in such earlier documents as Mazu's stele inscription, *Baolin zhuan*, *Zutang ji*, and *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄.[45] Compilers' personal narrative voices are for the most part absent from the text, and when they do appear they are easy to recognize.[46] These Buddhist works do of course to a certain extent reflect their compilers' biases and sectarian predilections, but such preconceptions are usually expressed in the compilers' editorial decisions about which information is worthy of mention and which one should be excluded from the record, just as was the case with the official histories.[47]

Chan biographies strongly resemble secular biographies both in terms of their contents and in their literary format. Often the influence of secular biographies on the format and contents of Chan biographies was not direct, but occurred via the other types of Buddhist biographical writings that adopted the pattern of secular biographies before the emergence of Chan. Chan biographies were especially influenced by the main

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[44] See Denis Twitchett, "Introduction," *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part I*, p. 40.

[45] These and other sources for Mazu's biography will be discussed at the beginning of Chapter Three.

[46] See Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi*, pp. 30–31, for quotations from sections of CDL which include Daoyuan's own narrative voice. All of the passages in question relate to events and relics (steles, pagodas, etc.) that Daoyuan himself saw or was aware of.

[47] Twitchett, "Introduction," *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3*, p. 40.

Buddhist genre that used biographical narrative, the collections of biographies of eminent monks. The main early works written in this style, Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* and Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, were modeled on the biographies found in the official histories, and they provided the Chan biographers with a readily-available literary style that could be easily appropriated and adapted for recording the lives of Chan monks.[48]

Both Chan and secular biographies start by giving the name and style of their subject, his place of origin, and family name and background. They both also often relate childhood incidents—both true and fictional—which demonstrate the subject's early predisposition for the role he was to assume latter in his life and illustrate the life-long consistency of his character and conduct. The short section about the early years is followed by a brief account of the development of the subject's career, starting with his early studies, examination (certification of enlightenment by a master in the Chan case), his ascent in the social (religious) hierarchy, his death, bestowal of posthumous honors, and notes on his sons (disciples). Within this framework, the subject's life history is further enhanced with descriptions of incidents in which he took part, excerpts from his writings (sermons) and anecdotes about him (dialogues with his disciples).[49]

Like the official biographies of noted officials, the individual Chan biographies were conceived of as part of a corpus of exemplary lives from a certain historical period. Unlike the secular collections of biographies, however, which include biographies of both

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[48] For a brief general introduction of the biographies of eminent monks, see John Kieschick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography*, pp. 4–15. For additional discussion of Huijiao's compilation of *Gaoseng zhuan*, see Arthur Wright, "Biography and Hagiography: Hui-chiao's *Lives of Eminent Monks*," in *Silver jubilee volume of the Jinbun-Kagaku-Kenkyūsho, Kyoto University*, pp. 383–432.

[49] For the format of official biography, see Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Confucian Personalities*, p. 28.

virtuous and evil officials as examples of the those moral qualities that were either esteemed or despised by Confucian scholars, Chan collections of biographies are devoid of any villains and include only positive examples. The individual biographies that constitute the corpus were not meant to be taken as documents that focus on their subject alone, but were parts of a larger work, a collection of officially sanctioned lives that provided cumulative didactic effect.[50] Thus, both secular and Chan biographies should be read not as independent examinations of their subject's personal character, or even of his life, but as explorations of his performance of some specific function or role. That role is defined by the larger context in which an individual biography is found—exemplary official in the case of the secular biographies, and enlightened monk and teacher in the Chan biographies. The literary styles of both types of biographies aim at producing exemplary models for the fulfillment of those functions, as defined by the literary and intellectual traditions that produced them.[51]

Another feature shared by secular and Chan biographies is that both are commemorative and didactic. The full didactic character of individual biographies, however, can only be ascertained when they are read in the context of the works in which they appear and the historiographic traditions that created them. The normative roles that individual biographies are modeled on are products of a particular ideological milieu, which in the cases of the secular and Chan biographies differ in a number of significant ways. As was noted already, genres are produced from other, earlier genres. A new genre such as the Chan collections of biographies is a transformation of one or more old

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[50] Ibid., p. 33.

[51] Ibid., p. 35.

genres.[52] Although the Chan biographies are modeled on the secular biographical writings and other types of Buddhist biographies, and treat their subjects in ways similar to those of the secular and general Buddhist biographies, they also possess a distinct individuality that sets them apart from their secular and other Buddhist counterparts.

The distinct individuality of Chan biographies, which is especially noticeable in the fully mature forms of Chan biographical writing composed from the late Tang onwards (of which *Chuandeng lu* is the best-known example), is formed by the importance attached to those elements that were unique to the Chan tradition. Such elements included focus on a lineage of enlightened teachers who transmit the flame of the Buddha's enlightenment, correlated stress on the primacy of the direct master-disciple relationship, emphasis on sudden enlightenment, and accentuation of the novelty and forcefulness of Chan methods of instruction. Through the incorporation of these unique features, the texts of the Chan School created a new conception of exemplary behavior and reformulated the apprehension of the sacred and its manifestations in the lives of its heroes.

The similarity of the formal organization of the Chan biographies to that of the secular biographies was probably to a significant extent a direct result of the Chan historians' conscious effort to work within the Chinese historiographic tradition and meet the predominant literary standards for secular historical writing. This was a pattern that was established by the earlier Buddhist historians, like Huijiao, the author of one the earliest collection of biographies of eminent monks. Huijiao and other Buddhist historians adopted the writing style of the secular historians to give the lives of the monks a place of honor in the cultural history of China, as well as to advance the domestication

[52] Todorov, "The Origin of Genres," p. 161.

of Buddhism and the acceptance of its monastic tradition by Chinese society.[53] Another important influence on Buddhist authors' choice of literary style was the consideration of the audience. As was noted above, many of the important monastic histories were written at the behest of the imperial court, and all of them had, in addition to the elite members of the Buddhist clergy, the educated members of the upper-class, especially the officials/literati, as their intended audience. It was thus quite natural that the Chan historians adopted a style that gave their work an air of legitimacy and was suited to the tastes and expectations of an important segment of their audience, whose continued support was essential for the flourishing of Buddhist institutions, including those monasteries that were associated with the Chan School.

## Concluding Remarks

Consideration of the provenance, literary features, and contents of the main Chan genres, as well as examination of the salient features that characterize Chan biographical writing are initial steps in the study of Chan literature. Understanding the forces that shaped the creation and subsequent institutionalization of individual genres, critical awareness of the older models of writing used by the creators of each genre, and sensitivity to the sensibilities and expectations of the medieval audiences for whom individual texts were written all need to be carefully taken into account before Chan texts can be properly used as sources for the historical study of Tang Buddhism. As a whole, each Chan genre was a product of a long history of literary development, during which Chan historians absorbed and/or adapted older models of Buddhist and secular writing, and at the same time contributed to the evolution of new types of religious literature that reflected the peculiar

[53] Arthur Wright, *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, p. 76.

concerns of the Chan tradition, as well as social and religious issues that were dominant at the time. The creation of each Chan genre was not a sudden invention of creative individuals, but a gradual process of adapting older literary models and fashioning new paradigms for the on-going recording (and/or fabrication) of the historical and legendary accounts of the gradual emergence and subsequent consolidation of Chan as the main elite tradition of Chinese Buddhism. Once we understand the general processes of genre codification and the spectrum of forces that shaped them, we are prepared to undertake more comprehensive investigation of the creation of specific genres. In the next chapter, I will undertake such examination of the genre that is most commonly associated with the Hongzhou School, the Chan records of sayings.

Chapter 2

# *Creation of the Records of Sayings*

The "records of sayings" (*yulu* 語錄) are arguably the best-known Chan genre. Like all Chan genres, these records are composite narratives, created from diverse literary formats, each of which had its own separate history prior to its use as a building block for the construction of a specific genre. Despite their compilers' best efforts to construct seemingly coherent narratives that illuminate Chan monks' search and realization of religious awakening, these texts bear a resemblance to quilts. Essentially they are like multicolored patchworks, collections of miscellaneous and often incongruous parts. Moreover, as the transmission of the lamp chronicles were created from virtually the same materials, understanding the original sources used by the compilers of the records of sayings also clarifies the composition of individual Chan monk's biographies in the transmission of the lamp chronicles. In order to understand texts composed in either of these two genres, we must determine the specific historical origins of each of the different types of writing that comprise them.

Expanding my argument about the composite nature of classical Chan texts, in this chapter I will trace the historical origin of each of the major literary formats that comprise those texts that belong to the records of sayings genre. In doing that, I want to accomplish two goals. First, I want to elucidate the structure of the records of sayings and the provenance of the diverse types of textual materials from which they were composed. Second, I will also use this opportunity to examine more closely the structure and

contents of *Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Mazu), a textual analysis of which will be the main focus of my study of the construction of the records of sayings. The choice of *Mazu yulu* was a natural one. First of all, its structure and content are typical of the records of the sayings of other distinguished Chan teachers who lived during the classical period, and the conclusions derived from its analysis are applicable to other similar texts. Second, the text is the best-known record of the monk who is the main subject of the present study, and as such it still has the greatest impact on most forms of (mis)apprehension of Mazu's teachings and his religious persona. Finally, in terms of practical considerations, there are enough extant early sources on Mazu to establish the approximate dating of the main parts of his record. Once we clarify the provenance and function of each of the main parts of the record, it will be possible to make more general judgments about the relevance (or lack thereof) of each type of materials as sources for the study of the history of mid-Tang Chan.

Among the various types of materials found in the records of sayings, by far the best-known are the classical Chan dialogues (*wenda* 問答). Indeed, there is such emphasis on the dialogues as paradigmatic examples of the new type of religious ethos introduced by the Chan School during the Tang that they are often taken as being synonymous with the whole genre of records of sayings, to the neglect of other types of materials found in them. In these pithy exchanges Chan teachers respond to their disciples' questions in unusual ways, and use unconventional teaching methods that include such shock-inducing techniques as shouting and beating, to induce them to relinquish their habitual patterns of thinking and lead them to spiritual awakening. As these stories are by far the best-known part of traditional Chan lore, the images of Chan adepts that first come to mind are those of unconventional spiritual virtuosi who dispense

their peculiar wisdom and guide their disciples in ways that ostensibly differ from those employed by the leaders of other religious traditions.

As was noted in the Introduction, according to Yanagida Seizan and other Japanese Chan/Zen scholars, the classical dialogue was a uniquely Chan literary format whose introduction was a direct result of the appearance of new pedagogical methods and modes of religious communication among the members of the Hongzhou School during the mid-Tang period.[1] Despite the widespread acceptance of this interpretation, one of my main objectives here is to reevaluate the provenance of this popular Chan literary format, and reconsider the putative links between its literary origins and the historical emergence of the Hongzhou School as the main branch of the Chan tradition. As will be shown in the following pages, a careful re-examination of the extant textual sources that is free from any preconceived notions about Chan beliefs and practices will strongly suggest that there are compelling reasons to dispute the widely-accepted scholarly views about the important role of the classical dialogue in the literature and religious practice of the Chan School during the middle Tang period. Moreover, as I ascertain the later origins of the classical dialogue format, I will also try to bring to attention the older strata of Chan literature that, despite their relative neglect by the later Chan tradition (as well as by most modern scholarship), are much more useful in reconstructing the history, doctrines, and

[1] Yanagida uses the phrase *kien mondō* 機緣問答 to refer to the classical Chan dialogue. This phrase has been translated as "encounter dialogue" in "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," translated by John McRae, in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, pp. 185–205. Though the introduction of a specific term to refer to classical Chan dialogues in a way that distinguishes them from other general dialogues found in Chinese Buddhist literature (including early Tang Chan texts) is useful, Yanagida's use of this term is somewhat problematic, since this term does not have wide currency (it is not even listed in most Japanese Buddhist dictionaries, including specialized Zen dictionaries). Nonetheless, due to the lack of a better term in the following pages I will use this expression.

practices of the Hongzhou School.

**Structure and Contents of the *Record Of Mazu***

*Mazu yulu* is one of the best known and most influential texts of the records of sayings genre.[2] A mature product of this genre compiled during the Song period, this text depicts the life and teaching of Mazu Daoyi (709–788), the leader of the Hongzhou School of Chan and the person widely considered to be most responsible for the establishment of the rhetorical style and methods of practice that came to characterize the Chan School during its "golden age." The structure and content of the *Mazu yulu* described below are typical of the records of the sayings. Though there are some variations in literary format and style among the various texts that belong to this genre, for the most part those differences are only minor. For example, in *Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Linji) the biographical material is placed at the end, instead at the beginning, where it is usually found.[3] Such unusual placement of the *xinglu* 行錄 (record of acts) at the end of the text can also be found in *Yunmen guanglu* 雲門廣錄 (The Extensive Record of Yunmen), which was compiled at about the same time as *Linji yulu*.[4] Notwithstanding the slight differences that can be found in the ways these texts are arranged, the kinds of

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[2] Its full title is *Jiangxi Mazu Daoyi chanshi yulu* 江西馬祖道一禪師語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Chan Master Mazu Daoyi of Jiangsi). It forms a part of *Sijia yulu* 四家語錄 (Record of the Sayings of Four Masters), which can be found in XZJ 119.405c–409a. Parts of the same text can also be found in CDL 6.104–06 (T 51.245c–246c), and *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄 1, XZJ 118.159b–161b. An English translation can be found in my *Sun-Face Buddha: The Teachings of Mazu and the Hongzhou School of Chan*, pp. 59–94.

[3] T 47.504b–506c.

[4] T 47.575a–76a. See also Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 576. New revised editions of both *Linji lu* and *Yunmen lu* were published together in 1267; see Akizuki Ryūmin, trans., *Rinzai roku* 臨濟錄, p. 252. For the compilation of *Yunmen lu* see Nagai Masashi 永井政之, "Unmon no goroku no seiritsu ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu" 雲門の語錄の成立に關する一考察, SK 13 (1971), pp. 111–16.

materials that comprise them are very similar, and it is justified to say that the records of the sayings of Mazu and the other late Tang Chan teachers that were compiled during the early Song period constitute a collection of texts that is quite homogeneous. That homogeneity is evidenced both in terms of the literary structure of these texts and in terms of their contents. As a typical product of the records of sayings genre and as one of its best-known specimens, *Mazu yulu* is a suitable example for the present purpose of analyzing the structure and contents of the texts that belong to this genre.

In terms of its form and structure, *Mazu yulu* consists of three parts: (1) a biographical sketch of Mazu's life, (2) transcripts of three of his sermons, and (3) thirty-two short dialogues between him and his disciples. Although these three parts follow each other in the order I just specified, they are presented together as a single continuous narrative in which there are no structural boundaries or explicit markings that set the three sections apart. Yet, the contrast in their literary structure and format, and even more importantly the differences in their contents, are quite striking. As we will see shortly, these differentiations denote the distinct origins of each of the three literary formats in which they were composed. This is a crucial point that has wide-ranging ramifications for our reinterpretation of Chan literature, history, doctrine, and practice. The production of *Mazu yulu* as a representative text of the *yulu* genre was a process of editing and combining these different kinds of materials, which the editors presented together as a homogeneous record of Mazu's life and teaching in a way that obscured the diverse origins of the sources on which the different parts of the text were based.

***Biographical sketch***. Mazu's biographical sketch, which forms the first part of the

text, follows the traditional pattern of Chinese Buddhist hagiography.[5] The brief biography is a paradigmatic example of the normative career pattern of a Chan teacher, which typically includes the stages of youthful predisposition towards religious life, ordination and early study of Buddhism, training under a Chan teacher, spiritual awakening, teaching of disciples, and gradual rise to fame. The information about Mazu's early life is brief. As is often the case in works of this type, Mazu is portrayed as exhibiting unusual characteristics from a young age. Like most other Chan teachers, Mazu entered monastery as a youth, and he subsequently received the precepts of a fully ordained monk (*bhikṣu*), presumably at the age of twenty, as it was stipulated by the Vinaya. The next important event in his monastic career, according to the text, was the meeting with his teacher Huairang 懷讓 (677–744), who was residing at Nanyue mountain 南嶽山. The idealized version of their first meeting is told in the famous (and probably apocryphal) story in which Huairang compares Mazu's sitting in meditation to polishing a brick with the intention of making it into a mirror.[6]

Immediately following the description of Mazu's meeting with Huairang, the text inserts a short prophecy (*yuyan* 豫言), which is placed in the mouth of Huineng. According to the prophecy, Patriarch Prajñātāra of India, the putative teacher of Bodhidharma, predicted Mazu's appearance in the world long before his actual birth.[7] The importance of prophetic statements of this kind is already evident in such early Chan texts as *Baolin zhuan*, where they are frequently used to establish the spiritual legitimacy

[5] Here I am only concerned with the text of MY, not with Mazu's life and teachings. For a detailed study of Mazu's biography, see Chapters Three and Four.

[6] See MY, XZJ 119.405a; Cheng Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 59–60.

[7] The same prediction is also recorded in Huairang's hagiography in CDL 5.92.

and religious authority of the Chan monks with whom the compilers of these texts felt certain affinities, or with whom they had direct connections and whose lineages they wanted to establish as orthodox.[8] In the case of Mazu's record, the prophesy is accompanied by a transmission verse that symbolizes the transmission of Chan enlightenment from Huairang to Mazu. This verse is modeled on those of the earlier Indian and Chinese patriarchs, which can be found in the extant fascicles of *Baolin zhuan*. The fact that Mazu was the last patriarch to receive a verse from his teacher as a symbol of the dharma transmission to him was a clear symbolic expression of *Baolin zhuan*'s (as well as *Mazu yulu*'s) authors' claim that Mazu was anointed as the orthodox heir of the Chan lineage that stemmed from Bodhidharma and Huineng.[9]

Next, the text states that after his initial awakening Mazu continued his training under Huairang for ten years. This was followed by a period of wandering, about which the text does not provide much information. Finally, Mazu settled in Jiangxi, first at Gonggong mountain 龔公山, and later at Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺 in Hongzhou, where he had exceptionally fruitful teaching career. The text claims that Mazu had one hundred and thirty-nine distinguished disciples, more than any other Chan teacher before or after him. As is customary with the biographies of noted Chan monks, Mazu's biographical sketch ends with information about his posthumous title and his stupa.

The life pattern presented in the *Mazu yulu* reflects two things, which bear reference both to the historical reality of Mazu's life as a monk and teacher, and to the idealization of his role as an archetype of a particular type of religious personality. First,

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[8] For the role of prophetic verses in BLZ, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 356–57.

[9] Huairang's transmission verse to Mazu is the last one quoted in all transmission of the lamp texts after ZTJ. The verse probably first appeared in the tenth (missing) fascicle of BLZ. See Shiina, "*Hōrinden* kenkyū kenju no itsubun" 寶林傳卷九卷十の逸文, SK 22 (1980), p. 194.

Mazu's biography is constructed according to a predetermined normative pattern that represents the religious career of a successful Chan teacher. In addition, the biography also reflects the Song editors' idealized conception of Mazu as an outstanding monk who transmitted the essence of the Buddhist religion..

***Sermons***. The second part of the *Mazu yulu* consists of transcripts of three of Mazu's sermons. The first and the third sermon are prefaced by the phrase "[Mazu] instructed the assembly, saying" (*shihzhong yun* 示衆云). Together with the term *shangtang* 上堂, which literary means to "ascend the [Dharma] hall," *shizhong* is an expression that is commonly used at the beginning of the transcripts of sermons of Chan teachers.[10] In Chan texts the two terms are used interchangeably, and they both refer to a formal occasion during which a Chan teacher would address his disciples in the main hall of the monastery for the purpose of elucidating the essentials of Buddhist soteriology, responding to his disciples' questions, resolving their doubts about the Buddhist teachings, and inspiring and encouraging them to persevere in their religious practice. The second sermon is initiated by a question from an anonymous monk, another common feature of this kind of texts.

[10] Both terms are discussed in Yanagida Seizan, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 513–25. Yanagida argues that there is notable difference between the two terms. Ibid., pp. 513–14. According to him, *shizhong* was used to refer to Mazu's sermons, but by the time of Baizhang this format was replaced by the new procedure of *shangtang*, which was a central part of Baizhang's putative institution of new system of Chan monastic life. Yanagida's assertion is not based on any convincing evidence. Instead, it seems that his arguments about the distinct uses of these two terms are mostly informed by his own normative beliefs concerning Baizhang's role as an originator a new type of Chan monasticism. There are plenty of examples in Chan texts where the two terms are used interchangeably. One such example is fascicle twenty-eight of CDL, in which the sermons of some Chan monks start with *shizhong* while those of other monks start with *shangtang* (see CDL 28.579, 581–82, 590, 592, 595–97). Another example is *Linji yulu*, where both terms are used at the beginning of sermons included in the first part of this work, which is entitled "Shangtang"; see Akizuki Ryomin, trans., *Rinzai roku*, pp. 11, 19, 21, 35, 38.

In his sermons Mazu seamlessly weaves in numerous quotations from and allusions to the Buddhist scriptures, usually without identifying his sources. Judging from their contents, the aim of the sermons seems to have been to instruct the disciples in the teachings of Buddhism and to provide them with religious inspiration. The format of the sermons is rather traditional, and their contents do not fit the radical image of Hongzhou School's leader, who is often depicted in modern secondary studies as a sort of religious revolutionary who was bent on overturning established traditions and transgressing conventional norms of monastic behavior. When reading the sermons, it is not difficult to imagine Mazu seated on the high seat lecturing to a large group of solemn monks, all of them orderly seated and respectfully listening to his talks about the identity of Mind and Buddha, perhaps silently nodding to his urging to see beyond their self-imposed limitations and awaken to the numinous reality that permeates all facets of their existence.

All three sermons exhibit a peculiar conception of Chan practice and a direct style of exposition that were characteristic of the Hongzhou School. but essentially they belong to a prevalent tradition of Buddhist discourse that existed in China long before the emergence of the Chan School. The use of sermons as a medium of religious instruction was not even a tradition that was unique to Chinese Buddhism. As can be seen from the earliest Buddhist scriptures, like those preserved in the Pali canon, the sermon was one of the main forms of religious instructions practiced by the Buddhist community ever since its early inception in Northern India. Sermons continued to be widely used, albeit with some modifications, throughout the historical spread of the religion on the Asian continent.

During the medieval period, sermons of eminent monks often drew large audiences and were a ubiquitous feature of Chinese Buddhism. Very often the sermons

consisted of the exegesis of Mahayana scriptures, delivered by erudite monks called *jiangshi* 講師 (lit. "lecturer").[11] Closer to the teaching format used by Chan monks were the sermons of a class of Buddhist teachers called *changdaoshi* 唱導師, who propagated Buddhist teachings without relying on a specific text. Some *changdaoshi* presented their sermons in a simple language that was accessible to the masses, while some were adept at presenting Buddhist teachings in ways that were appealing to the educated elites, both lay and monastic. Thus, the sermons of Chan monks like Mazu were presented in a format that was both respectable and widely-recognized in the mainstream tradition of medieval Chinese Buddhism.[12]

The sermons convey a conservative image of Mazu as a rather traditional teacher. They are filled with scriptural quotations and allusions, and in them Mazu adopts as his teaching medium a popular format that was widely used by the broader Buddhist

[11] See Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 240–42.

[12] Yanagida's argument that Chan sermons were markedly different from conventional sermons that were in vogue at the time (presented in the passage referred to above, Yanagida Seizan, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 513–14) is based more on his heartfelt convictions about the uniqueness of Chan teaching methods—indeed, the uniqueness of the whole Chan experience—than on any sound textual evidence. We simply do not have sufficient data to ascertain the exact format and ritual setting in which Chan sermons were delivered during the mid-Tang period. The earliest description of the format of a Chan sermon is the following brief passage from *Chanmen guishi*, which is appended to Baizhang's biography in CDL: "When the Elder (i.e. the abbot) enters the [Dharma] hall and ascends to the high seat to preside over the meeting, all the monks should stand on the sides in files and listen [attentively to what is said]. At that time the monks can raise questions about the essentials of the teaching and engage in an open and alive dialogue with the Elder, so that it is shown how to abide in accord with Dharma." CDL 6, p. 117; English translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 34. It is my feeling that the ritual context in which Chan monks presented their sermons was not much different from the one used in most other monasteries. Descriptions of such ritual settings for Buddhist sermons can be found in monastic texts such as Yuanzhao's 元照 *Sifenlü xingshichao zichiji* 四分律行事鈔資持記, T 40.404b (also quoted in Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, p. 247). See also Edwin O. Reischauer, trans., *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, pp. 154–55, for a translations of passage from Ennin's diary that describes a public lecture which Ennin heard in 839.

community. In his sermons Mazu assumes the traditional function of a Dharma teacher, as many Chinese monks—like Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), for example—had done before him, and as many continued to do after him.

***Dialogues***. The picture changes quite dramatically when we come to the third part of the *Mazu yulu*, the dialogues between Mazu and his monastic and lay disciples. The thirty-two dialogues that appear in the text are brief records of Mazu's interaction with his disciples, many of whom came to be know as the most distinguished Chan teachers of their time. In pithy exchanges that have been made by far the most popular part of Chan lore in both popular and scholarly works on Chan/Zen, Mazu answers his disciples' questions in unusual ways and uses unconventional pedagogical techniques, such as shouting and beating, to lead them to awakening. The dialogues are written in such a way as to suggest that they represent a pious record of great teacher's enlightened activity, which is presented as a direct expression of the essence of the Buddhist way in the midst of daily situations set in the context of medieval monastic life. In these short exchanges traditional Buddhist discourse is completely forsaken, and there is hardly any mention of common religious doctrines and practices. Instead, the text presents brief stories that depict Mazu's seemingly spontaneous interaction with his disciples, as in the following account of Shuilao's awakening that is presented as a direct result of Mazu's unusual teaching:

> When Rev. Shuilao 水老和尚 of Hongzhou came to see the Patriarch (i.e. Mazu) for the first time, he asked, "What is the meaning of [Bodhidharma's] coming from the West?" The Patriarch said, "Bow down!" As soon as Shuilao went down to bow, the Patriarch kicked him. Shuilao had great awakening. He rose up clapping his hands and laughing heartily, and said, "Wonderful! Wonderful! The source of myriad samādhis and limitless subtle meanings can all be realized on the tip of a single hair." He then paid his respects to the Patriarch and withdrew. Later he told the assembly, "Since the day I was kicked by Master Ma, I have not

stopped laughing."[13]

In this short story, instead of being portrayed as an abbot of a public monastery and an exemplar of proper moral behavior to a large monastic community, Mazu is depicted as an iconoclast par excellence. In this and the other stories that supposedly relate the interaction between him and his disciples, Mazu is portrayed as a radical religious leader who challenged the established forms of conventional behavior and introduced new forms of religious expression that were at variance with the prevalent monastic mores of his time.

**Images of Chan Iconoclasm**

The dialogue format was of course not a unique literary feature that appeared for the first time in Chan literature. There were many earlier examples of use of this format both within and outside of Chinese Buddhist literature. Some of the most influential texts of the classical Chinese tradition, such as *Lunyu* 論語 and *Mengzi* 孟子, skillfully utilized the dialogue format to present the teachings of the progenitors of the Confucian tradition. Among early Chinese texts, *Zhuangzi* 莊子 also stands out for its use of the dialogue format in ways that bear some similarities to the Chan dialogues of Tang monks.

There are also many examples of the use of dialogue in Buddhist literature. This literary format plays an important role in many Buddhist scriptures, starting with the earliest scriptures, like the ones preserved in the Pali canon. Many of the Mahayana

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[13] MY, XZJ 119.408a; Cheng Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 16. There is a different version of this story in *Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄: "One day, as the Master (Mazu) was gathering rattan [with the community], he saw a puddle of water (*shuilao),* and made a gesture as if he was going to splash the water. Shuilao came close to him as if to receive [the water], and the Patriarch kicked him over. Shuilao rose up laughing heartily, and said, 'The source of limitless subtle meanings and myriad *samādhi*s can all be realized on the tip of a single hair.'" XZJ 118.80d; Cheng Chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 92, n. 58. The *Gu zunsu yulu* version has a different homophone for the second character

scriptures that were popular during the Tang period—such as the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* (*Weimo jie jing* 維摩詰經), the *Lotus Scripture* (*Fahua jing* 法華經), the *Huayan Scripture* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), and the various scriptures belonging to the Prajñā-pāramitā (般若) corpus—also make extensive use of the dialogue format. Similarities between the Chan dialogues and some of the dialogues found in the scriptures eventually led to the inclusion of dialogues between the Buddha and his disciples (or, less often, between various bodhisattvas) culled from the scriptures in the *gongan* collections that were compiled during the Song period.[14]

Likewise, many of the early Chan texts rediscovered in Dunhuang also include dialogues between Chan teachers and their disciples or other Buddhist monks. Such examples include Shenhui's *Putidamo nanzong ding shifei lun* 菩提達摩南宗定是非論,[15] as well as a few texts produced by the Northern School of Chan, such as *Xiuxin yao lun* 修心要論,[16] which records the teachings of the fifth patriarch Hongren, and Shenxiu's *Yuanming lun* 圓明論.[17] Outside of the Chan School, several examples of

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in Shuilao's name, 潦 instead of 老.

[14] See, for example, the following cases from *Biyanlu* 碧巖錄: no. 65 (T 48.195b–c), which records a dialogue between the Buddha and a heretic; no. 84 (T 48.209b–c), which consists of the famous debate about non-duality between Mañjuśrī and Vimalakīrti from the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*; and no. 92 (T 48.216b), which consists of an apocryphal Chan-like encounter dialogue between Mañjuśrī and the Buddha, the source of which is unclear.

[15] Yang Zengwen 楊曾文, ed., *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu* 神會和尚禪話錄, pp. 15–46.

[16] See John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, pp. 121–32, for an English translation, and Ibid., attachment following p. 394, for original text.

[17] See McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 149–71, for an English translation, and Ibid., attachment following p. 394, for original text. The dialogue format used in this text is not a record of actual questions and answers exchanged between a teacher and a disciple. Rather, the literary format used here is a purely literary convention often used in Tang exegetical literature. Examples of similar use of a dialogue format can be found in the writings of many prominent Tang exegetes, including Jizang's

dialogues can be found in Zhiyi's biography, which includes conversations between Zhiyi and his teacher Huisi 慧思 (515–577), as well as conversations with his disciples.[18] From all these examples it is obvious that the use of the dialogue format was in no way restricted to the classical Chan tradition.

What is unique about the classical Chan dialogues and what sets them apart from their earlier secular and Buddhist precursors (including the dialogues found in early, i.e. pre-Hongzhou School, Chan texts) is their inclusion of illogical elements, and their depiction of iconoclastic behavior.[19] The above story about Shuilao's awakening, which depicts Mazu as enlightening Shuilao about the essence of Chan by kicking him into a pool of dirty water, is a good example of the presence of such features. Let me give few more examples, taken from *Mazu yulu* and the records of two of Mazu's disciples, Nanquan 南泉 (748–834) and Huizang 慧藏 (d.u.).

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吉藏 (549–623) *Sanlun xuanyi* 三論玄義 (T 45.1–14) and Fazang's 法藏 (643–712) *Huayan wujiao zhang* 華嚴五教章 (T45.477–508).

[18] *Sui taintai zhizhe dashi biezhuan* 隋天台智者大師別傳, by Guanding 灌頂 (561–632), T 50.191a–96c. Another example of the use of question-and-answer format in pre-Chan literature can be found in fascicle one of *Hongming ji* 弘明集, T 52.1b–9a.

[19] Here I use the term "iconoclasm" in a broader sense than the one implied by the literal meaning of the original Greek (lit. "breaking of idols"). Accordingly, iconoclasm designates a challenge of or attack on established religious beliefs and practices, manifested in such ways as rejection or reformulation of received religious traditions and institutions. It is interesting to note, however, that there are Chan stories—like the one about Danxia (738–823), a disciple of Mazu, burning a Buddha image to warm himself during a cold winter night—which depict behavior that bears striking analogies to some of the issues raised during the Byzantine debates about iconoclasm during roughly the same period. The term "traditionalism" is also used in a broad sense of "adherence to tradition," which implies an attitude of acceptance of the various sets of belief, mores, and practices that define a tradition, transmitted from one generation to another among the members of a given religious or social group. In the present case, "traditionalism" refers to all those elements that the Chan school received from the earlier Buddhist traditions of India and China, including monastic mores and institutions, mainstream doctrinal outlooks, modes of religious instruction, etc.

Chan teacher Fahui of Letan asked the Patriarch (i.e. Mazu), "What is the meaning of Patriarch [Bodhidharma's] coming from the West?" The Patriarch said, "I am going to tell you quietly; come closer." As Fa-hui stepped forward, the Patriarch gave him a blow, saying, "It is not to be discussed in front of another person. Come back tomorrow." The next day Fahui entered the Dharma hall again and asked, "May the Reverend say something, please." The Patriarch said, "Go and wait until I am about to give a lecture; then come out and I will testify to you." On hearing this Fahui had awakening, and said, "Thanks to the great assembly for testifying." Then he encircled the Dharma hall once and went away.[20]

The master (i.e. Nanchuan) set off together with (two of his fellow disciples of Mazu) Guizong 歸宗(d.u.) and Magu 麻谷(d.u.) to pay their respects to National Teacher Nanyang [Huizhong] 南陽國師(675–775). While on the way, the master stopped, drew a circle on the road, and said, "If you can say something, we will continue." Guizong sat in the circle; Magu bowed like a woman. The master said, "Then we don't go." Guizong asked, "What kind of thought is that?" The master took them back, and they did not go to pay their respects to the National Teacher.[21]

The master (i.e. Huizang) asked Xitang 西堂(735–814), "Do you know how to grasp empty space?" Xitang said, "Yes, I know." The master asked, "How can you grasp it?" Xitang made a gesture as if trying to grasp the space with his hand. The master said, "How can you grasp empty space in that way?" Xitang asked, "How is my elder Dharma-brother going to grasp it?" The master grabbed Xitang 's nostril and pulled it. Xitang cried with pain, and said, "You are pulling my nostril to death. Stop it immediately!" The master said, "This is the way to grasp empty space."[22]

In all of the above examples we find seemingly eccentric exchanges that at first sight seem to defy any attempt at logical explanation about the rationale behind the bizarre acts described in the stories. Mazu's beating of Fahui, Magu's bowing in famine fashion on the middle of a road, and Huizang's violent pulling of Xitang's nose are all typical examples of patterns of iconoclastic behavior that are quite familiar to anyone who have some acquaintance with Chan literature. These types of exchanges between Chan monks, which often display attitudes that border on antinomianism and which are characteristic

[20] MY, XZJ 119.407b; translation from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 70–71.

[21] CDL 8.134; translation from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 108.

[22] CDL 6.111; translation from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 117.

of the records of members of the Hongzhou School, are quite distinct from the dialogues found in earlier Chan texts. Let us compare the three dialogues quoted above with the following two excerpts from earlier Chan texts, first from Shenhui's *Putidamo nanzong dingshifei lun*, and then the Dunhuang version of the *Platform Scripture* (*Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經).

> The Reverend (i.e. Shenhui) asked dharma-teacher [Chong-]yuan [崇] 遠 : "Does dharma-teacher Yuan see the Buddha nature?" Dharma-teacher Yuan replied, "No, I do not see the Buddha nature." The Reverend said, "If you do not see the Buddha nature, then you cannot preach the *Great Nirvana Scripture* (*Da niepan jing* 大涅槃經)." Dharma-teacher Yuan said, "Why can I not preach the *Great Nirvana Scripture*?" The Reverend said, "The 'Lion's Roar' chapter says, 'If one can think of and explain the meaning of the *Great Nirvana Scripture*, you should know that such a person sees the Buddha nature.' Since the dharma-teacher does not see the Buddha nature, he is not qualified to teach [the scripture]." Dharma-teacher Yuan asked, "Does the Chan teacher sees the Buddha nature?" The Reverend said, "[Yes, I] see it."....[23]

> Zhicheng asked the master (i.e. Huineng) to give his explanation of the precepts, wisdom, and meditation. The master said, "Listen to my explanation and you will know my view. The mind-ground, free from error, is the precept of the self-nature; the mind ground, undisturbed, is the mediation of self-nature; the mind-ground, free from ignorance, is the wisdom of self-nature.".... Zhicheng said, "Please explain what you mean by 'not set up.'" The Master said, "Self-nature is without error, disturbance, and ignorance...."[24]

The dialogues presented in the last two quotations are obviously of a very different kind from the dialogues from the records of Hongzhou monks quoted earlier (or the dialogues from Baizhang's and Huangbo's records quoted in Chapter One).[25] Both Shenhui and

[23] *Pudidamo nanzong dingshifei lun*, in Yang Zengwen, ed., *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu*, pp. 24–25.

[24] Translation adapted from Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, pp. 164–65.

[25] See also McRae, *The Northern School*, 91–97, for additional examples of passages from Northern School texts that resemble the encounter dialogue model. Despite superficial resemblance of these passages to the encounter dialogues retroactively attributed to Mazu and other Hongzhou figures, I do not see any strong indication that there was a direct connection between the two.

Huineng are here presented as teachers who engage other monks in reasoned discussions about specific points of Buddhist belief and practice. In the first quotation, Shenhui uses the authority of the *Nirvana Scripture* to lend support to his ideas. Although in the second quotation Huineng seems to be subverting traditional definitions of basic Buddhist concepts, the vocabulary he uses is still very much that of mainstream Chinese Buddhism. The structure and contents of the last two quotations are basically those of rational religious discourse, and they both stand in sharp contrast to the seemingly nonsensical statements and iconoclastic acts presented in the first group of quotations taken from the records of Hongzhou monks.

Since such iconoclastic dialogues as the ones quoted above appear in the records of Mazu and other monks who belonged to the Hongzhou School, but do not appear in the records of other Chan monks who lived prior to Mazu, most Japanese scholars have assumed that the iconoclastic dialogue format that figures so prominently in Song Chan text was invented by Mazu and his followers. Using stories of this kind as their main textual sources, numerous Japanese scholars, starting with D. T. Suzuki, have depicted Mazu and the rest of classical Chan as a radically new, revolutionary tradition that stood in sharp contrast with the rest of late medieval Chinese Buddhism. The view that these intriguing stories are records of the main religious practice of Chan monks have for the most part gone unchallenged, despite the depiction of ostensibly immoral behavior that appears in some of the stories. Quite to the contrary, it seems that such depictions of unconventional behavior and transgressions of traditional morality have added to the appeal of these stories, as can be seen from the popular response to Zen in contemporary Western culture. Chan iconoclasm seems to resonate with the kind of modern audience that is sympathetic to a social ethos that underscores attitudes of moral relativity and rejection of

traditional values, and that for the most part is unaware of the cultural and institutional contexts in which these stories were supposed to have taken place.[26]

In spite of encounter dialogues' appeal as unique records of exuberant Chan religiosity, we must not overlook the problems that arise from their use as sources of historical information about Tang Chan. The question of their historicity is brought into sharper relief when we consider the presence of conservative images of classical Chan in older strata of Chan literature, which are usually glossed over or ignored because of the fixation on the iconoclastic dialogues. For example, there is noticeable discrepancy between the radical image of Mazu depicted in Shuilao's story and his historical role as an abbot of a monastery which was an integral part of mainstream monastic Buddhism. While in Shuilao's and other similar stories Mazu is portrayed as an iconoclast par excellence, the extensive study of his life presented in Chapter Three shows that he was a well-connected abbot of a large provincial monastery who presided over a rather conventional monastic community. It is quite apparent that Mazu of the historical record

[26] Though stories of this kind are unique to Chan, there are parallel examples of unconventional behavior and transgression of long-established ethical norms in other religious traditions. For example, in Orthodox Christianity there was the tradition of monks, especially prevalent in Russia, who inspired by the example of St Paul followed the ideal of "fool for Christ's sake" (*salos* in Greek). They tried to identify with Christ crucified, and participate in his poverty, humiliation, nakedness, and self-emptying. See John Saward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality*, p. 25. One of them was St. Basil the Blessed (d. 1552), who led the life of a vagabond and walked naked in the streets of sixteenth century Moscow. In Western Europe, there were the antinomian teachings of Johann Agricola and his followers, contemporaries of St Basil, who asserted that Christians are freed by grace from the need to obey the Ten Commandments. However, while in most other traditions such subversive movements were usually relegated to marginal positions within the established ecclesiastical structures, in the case of Chan by the early eleventh century stories that depict highly unconventional behavior were the central part of the canon of what at the time was the main school of Chinese Buddhism. That is even more unusual when we consider that the Chan School was tightly integrated into the social fabric of a Chinese empire whose cultural ethos and social mores were defined by traditional Confucian values.

was an unlikely revolutionary or iconoclast, especially of the kind that is depicted in numerous encounter dialogue stories.[27]

We can assume that stories like the one about Shuilao's awakening tell us something about Chan Buddhism at the time they were created, but *when* was that? Can the contents of stories of this kind be taken at face value as revealing anything about the views and practices of the monks who appear in them, or are they reflections of later images of classical Chan which might not have much to do with what monks like Mazu and Shuilao actually did in the course of their religious careers? To slightly rephrase the question: are both traditional and contemporary writers about Chan justified when they use these stories as historical records about the classical Chan tradition, or are they perhaps mistakenly basing their interpretations on apocryphal textual materials that bear no direct relevance to the tradition they are supposed to describe? If the later is the case—as I suspect it is—then perhaps we should start looking elsewhere for more reliable information about the teachings of Mazu and the rest of mid-Tang Chan.

In order to solve the apparent contradictions that arise from the existence of the contrasting images of Mazu and classical Chan I just referred to, we have to examine the composition of those Chan texts where these divergent images appear.

### Composition of the "Records of Sayings"

All three parts of the *Mazu yulu*—the biographical sketch, his sermons, and the dialogues between him and his disciples—are placed together in such a way as to indicate that together they form a homogeneous expression of the Chan way as manifested in the life

[27] Mazu's apparent skills at securing the political and economic patronage of the provincial elites, including at least three of the civil governors of Hongzhou, the prefecture where his monastery was

and teaching of Mazu. There are no explicit marks that delineate the structural boundaries of the text, and no indications about the origin of the sources used by its compiler(s). Nonetheless, the differences between the three constituting parts are quite clear. The differences in form and contents between the sermons and the dialogues are particularly striking. In terms of their dramatic structure, there is a subtle yet noticeable change in both the roles of the main protagonists, the setting of their interaction, and the functions they play.

In the sermons we see Mazu in the role of a Dharma teacher in front of a largely passive audience of monks. The relationship between them is hierarchical, and there seems to be a clear gap between Mazu's role as a religious teacher and that of his disciples as attentive students. On the other hand, in the dialogues we find descriptions of spontaneous exchanges between a master and his students set in what at first sight appears to be the realistic setting of a medieval Chinese Buddhist monastery. In this part of the record, Mazu's audience is not passive at all. On the contrary, they actively participate in the story by asking questions and trying (with varying degrees of success) together with their teacher to take part in the concrete manifestations of the Chan truth.

In order to assess the significance of these differences between the discursive and rational explanations of Chan doctrine that characterize the sermons on one hand, and the enigmatic, paradoxical exchanges depicted in the dialogues on another, we have to turn our attention to the evolution of each of the composite elements that constitute the texts that belong to the records of sayings genre. An investigation of the creation of these texts and the provenance of their composite parts, and analysis of the distinct conceptions of

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located, show him to have been a monk who was quite adept at working within the social system that existed at the time.

Chan soteriology they each imply can help to elucidate the relationship between the sermons and the dialogues, and clarify how much light they shed on (or how much distortion and confusion they bring about) the historical development of Chan School during the Tang. As we establish these distinctions, we can reevaluate the interpretations about the novel forms of religious instruction and practice, as well as new doctrinal and institutional developments, that were supposedly instituted by Mazu and the Hongzhou School. For the sake of examining these issues in greater detail, I will continue to focus on *Mazu yulu* as a representative text of the records of sayings genre.

***Provenance of* Mazu yulu.** Mazu's record of sayings, *Mazu yulu*, was first published during the Northern Song dynasty as a part of *Sijia yulu* 四家語錄 (Records of the Sayings of Four Masters). In addition to Mazu's record, this collection also includes the records of Baizhang, Huangbo, and Linji, who represent the first three generations of Mazu's direct spiritual descendants. Since *Sijia yulu* was compiled by the Song Linji School, on an ideological level this text's function was to buttress that school's claim that Linji, its putative founder, was the orthodox heir of Mazu's Chan lineage. As it includes the records of sayings of some of the best-known and most influential Hongzhou School monks, this collection is a valuable source of materials about this Chan movement. At the same time, *Sijia yulu*'s late date of compilation, and the diverse literary and historical origins of the texts that comprise it, all call for caution when it is used as a source for the historical study of Tang Chan. That is especially the case with the two texts that were compiled during the Song, the records of the sayings of Mazu and Linji.

The existence of *Sijia yulu* cannot be corroborated before the late eleventh century. The oldest record that confirms its existence is Yang Jie's 楊傑 preface to it, dated the first day of the eleventh month of the eight year of the Yuanfeng 元豐 period

(November 20, 1085).[28] The histories of the various parts that comprise this collections are quite varied. Mazu's record of sayings does not have a documented history as an independent text before its inclusion in this collection. It is most likely that it appeared in the *Sijia yulu* as a whole text for the first time. Like Mazu's record, the record of Linji, *Linji yulu*, is also of a relatively late date. Though this text seems to have existed independently before its inclusion in *Sijia yulu*, it first appeared only during the Northern Song period, not long before its inclusion in the collection.

Compared to the records of the sayings of Mazu and Linji, Huangbo's two records—*Chuanxin fayao* 傳心法要 (The Essentials of the Transmission of Mind) and *Wanling lu* 宛陵錄 (Wanling Record)—and Baizhang's *Baizhang guanglu* 百丈廣錄 (Baizhang's Extensive Record) are much older. Parts of *Chuanxin fayao* and *Wanlinglu* were recorded by Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860) during the late 840s, when he served two assignments as a high government official in the South, during which he met Huangbo and studied Buddhism with him.[29] The final versions of both texts seems to have been compiled from Pei Xiu 's notes and the notes of other disciples not long after Huangbo's passing away.[30]

The second of Baizhang's two records that is also included in the collection, the much-shorter *Baizhang yulu* 百丈語錄, is clearly a product of the Song period. Its contents consist of Baizhang's brief biographical sketch and a series of dialogues with Mazu and his own disciples that are taken from other late Chan collections, presented in a

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[28] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 474.

[29] For Pei Xiu's association with Huangbo, see Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫, "Hai Kyū den: Tōdai no ichi shidaifu to bukkyō" 裴休傳—唐代の一士大夫と佛教, TG 64 (1992), pp. 140–50. For the compilation of Huangbo's records, see Yanagida's comments in Iriya Yoshitaka, trans., *Denshin hōyō, Enryōroku* 傳心法要。宛陵錄, pp. 172–76.

literary format that is characteristic of Song *yulu* texts.[31] It is interesting to note that the earlier of these texts, the two records of Huangbo and Baizhang's *Guanglu*, are noticeably more conservative statements on Chan soteriology than the later texts, the records of the sayings of Mazu, Linji, and Baizhang. Only parts of the last three texts contain materials that give support to the view that the Hongzhou School was an iconoclastic tradition. Those parts consist entirely of classical Chan dialogues, which are entirely missing in the earlier two texts.

Going back to Mazu's record, the three century gap between Mazu's passing away and the compilation of *Mazu yulu* is a very long period, which makes the authenticity of the text quite suspect. However, most of the materials that were used by the compiler(s) of *Mazu yulu* can be found in earlier texts. In the following pages I will trace the oldest textual sources that contain versions of the materials that comprise each of Mazu's record's three constituent parts—the biographical sketch, the sermons, and the dialogues—and try to determine when was the earliest appearance of the contents of each of the three parts.

***Sources for Mazu's biography***. The earliest extant source that contains biographical information about Mazu's life is *Tang gu Hongzhou Kaiyuansi Shimen Daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu* 唐故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師碑銘并序, Mazu's stele inscription.[32] The inscription was composed in 791, three years after Mazu's death, by the noted official and literatus Quan Deyu 權德輿. A short stone inscription was

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[30] See Yanagida's comments in Iriya Yoshitaka, trans., *Denshin hōyō, Enryōroku*, pp. 172–76.

[31] Parts of *Baizhang yulu* and BGL can also be found in ZTJ 14.317–21 (K 45.323a–24c), and CDL 6.113–17 (T 51.249b–50c).

[32] QTW 501.2261c–62a, *Tangwenzui* 唐文粹 64.1058–59, and *Quanzai zhi wenji* 權載之文集 28.167a–68a. All three editions of the stele inscription are quite similar.

discovered in 1966 underneath Mazu's memorial pagoda located on the grounds of Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺 in Jingan county 靖安縣, Jiangxi province. This inscription was also composed in 791, on the occasion of the formal opening of the memorial pagoda.[33] In addition to Quan's stele inscription, *Song gaoseng zhuan* also mentions the existence of another memorial inscription which was composed by Mazu's contemporary Baoji 包佶.[34] Since Quan was personally acquainted with Mazu and his close disciples, he was most likely well aquatinted with the basic biographical details about his life. Notwithstanding the presence of hagiographic embellishments of the kinds that were regular features of commemorative inscriptions written for medieval religious leaders, we can reasonably assume that the basic outline of Mazu's life presented in these almost contemporary sources is fairly accurate. The same can also be said of the biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which, although compiled at a considerably later date, was based on early sources.

Biographies of Mazu that appear in later Chan works that were composed after the Tang were largely based on the two inscriptions. In addition, the editors of later Chan texts most likely also used his hagiography in *Baolin zhuan*, compiled in 801. Unfortunately, only small fragments of *Baolin zhuan*'s tenth fascicle, which included Mazu's biography, survive, but this text was most likely available at the time of the compilation of the early Song Chan histories. The reliance on the Tang stele inscription and other early epigraphic evidence as sources for biographical information about the

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[33] For the discovery of the inscription and its contents, see Chen Baiquan 陈柏泉, "Mazu chanshi shihan tiji yu Zhang Zongyan tianshi kuanji" 马祖禅师石函题记与张宗演天师圹记, *Wenshi* 文史 14 (1982), p. 258.

[34] SGSZ 10, T 50.766c. See also Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki", p. 117. For a more detailed discussion of the sources for the study of Mazu's life, see the beginning of Chapter Three.

lives of eminent Tang monks is particularly evident in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, and Mazu's biography is another example of such use of earlier materials. The same is true of his hagiography in *Chuandeng lu*, though perhaps less so than in the case of *Song gaoseng zhuan*. Thus, we can presume that the core information about Mazu's life presented in his record of sayings—although perhaps somewhat disappointing in its brevity—was ultimately based on sources that were written by well-known Tang literati who were his contemporaries.

***Origins of the sermons***. The existence of Mazu's *yuben* 語本 is mention in Dongsi Ruhui's 東寺如會 and Yangshan's 仰山 hagiographies in *Zutang ji*. Ruhui is recorded as saying that Mazu's *yuben* included discussion about the well-known maxim "Mind is Buddha," while Yangshan is cited as stating that in his sermons Mazu quoted the *Lankāvatāra Scripture* (*Lengqie jing* 楞伽經).[35] Mazu's extant sermons do indeed contain the passages alluded to by Ruhui (who was a direct disciple of Mazu), and by Yangshan (a third generation disciple).[36] This could be interpreted as evidence that a collection of Mazu's sermons was in circulation during the ninth century, although we also have to keep in mind that the provenance of the contents of the two *Zutang ji* hagiographies presents problems of its own. Furthermore, a passage from one of Mazu's sermons in *Zongjing lu*, in which he states that the mind is beyond birth and death and compares its age to that of space, seems to be the source for a similar statement in Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao*, as well as a similar statement in one of Wuye's sermons

[35] ZTJ 15.338, and ZTJ 18.410, respectively.

[36] For the passage in Mazu's sermon that corresponds to Yangshan's quotation, see CDL 6.104, and MY, XZJ 119.406a, while for Ruhui quotation, see CDL 6.105, and MY, XZJ 119.407c.

quoted in *Zongjing lu*.[37] Even more importantly, Mazu statement, "That Way need no cultivation, just do not defile," is quoted in the record of his disciple Baizhang.[38]

Variant versions of Mazu's sermons can be found in Yanshou's *Zongjing lu*,[39] compiled around 961, as well as in *Chuandeng lu*, compiled 1004.[40] *Zongjing lu* also contains two sermons that cannot be found in either *Mazu yulu* or any other work.[41] Another version of the first sermon can also be found in *Zutang ji*, compiled in 952; this version is almost the same as the one in the *Mazu yulu*.[42] Admittedly, the earliest extant versions of the sermons, those found in *Zongjing lu* and *Zutang ji*, are still quite late, and their attribution to Mazu by the compilers of these texts is not conclusive proof that they are actual records of Mazu's teachings. Fortunately, there are a few texts from early ninth century that can help us to attest to sermon's mid-Tang provenance.

Some of the earliest descriptions of the teachings of Mazu and his Hongzhou School can be found in the writings of Zongmi 宗密 (780–841). In his *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源 諸詮集都序, Zongmi described the teachings of the Hongzhou School in the following manner (the division into sections is mine):

> [A] The school [that teaches] direct disclosure of the mind's nature states that all dharmas, whether existent or empty, are nothing but the true nature. The true nature

[37] For Mazu's quotation, see ZJL 14, T 48.492a; for Huangbo's passage, see T 48.381a (Iriya Yoshitaka, trans., *Denshin hōyō, Enryō roku* 傳心法要, 宛陵錄, p. 30); and for Wuye's, see ZJL 98, T 48.942c. These correspondences are pointed out in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 494.

[38] See MY, XZJ 119.406c, and BGL, XZJ 118.85.

[39] T 48.418b–c, 492a, 707b.

[40] CDL 6.104–05, and CDL 28.440a–b. In his "Goroku no rekishi," Yanagida places the different versions of Mazu's sermons next to each other, which makes the comparison between them very convenient. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 484–89, and pp. 496–98.

[41] T 48.492a-b. See also Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 488–89.

[42] ZTJ 14.304 (K 45.319b).

is devoid of characteristics and is inactive. Its essence cannot be described in any way: it is neither profane nor holy, neither cause nor effect, neither good nor evil. However, through its functioning the essence can manifest in numerous ways; it can manifest as profane or holy, with form and appearance[43]....[B] This very thing that is capable of speech and physical activity, of desire, anger, compassion and patience, capable of giving rise to good and evil, and experiencing suffering and joy is precisely your Buddha-nature. This is the original Buddha, and outside of it there is no other Buddha. [C] Because of the spontaneous nature of this fundamental reality it is impossible to arouse the mind to cultivate the Way. The Way is mind, and mind cannot be cultivated with mind; evil is also mind, and mind cannot be extinguished by mind. Neither extinguishing nor cultivating, just being oneself and acting in a natural way, that is liberation. The [true] nature is like empty space; it neither increases nor decreases. [D] What use there is in trying to make it complete? Just at all times and all places stop creating any karma, thus nourishing the spirit and supporting the womb of sagehood, spontaneously manifest spiritual wonders. This is true enlightenment, true cultivation, and true attainment.[44]

If we compare Zongmi's description of the teachings Hongzhou School with the extant version of Mazu's sermons, it becomes apparent that there are great similarities between the two. The first three sentences of Zongmi's description (section A) resemble the following statement from the *Record of Mazu*: "All dharmas are buddhadharmas and all dharmas are liberation. Liberation is identical with suchness: all dharmas never leave suchness. Whether walking, standing, sitting or reclining, everything is always inconceivable function. The scriptures say that the Buddha is everywhere."[45] Echoing the first sentence of section C from Zongmi's description ("Because of the spontaneous nature of this fundamental reality it is impossible to arouse the mind to cultivate the Way"), in Mazu's record there is the similar statement, "The way does not belong to

[43] Zongmi considers both the Hongzhou School and the Heze 荷澤 School of Shenhui, to which he claimed to belong, as teaching "direct disclosure of the mind's nature." He identifies this approach to religious practice and realization as directly related to the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, especially as presented in the *Huayan Scripture*.

[44] *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源 諸詮集都序, T 48.402c; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 38–39.

cultivation. If one speaks of any attainment through cultivation, whatever is accomplished in that way is still subject to regress."[46]

By the same token, the last three sentences from Zongmi's passage quoted above (section D) appear to be a direct paraphrase of the following passages in *Mazu yulu*:

> The self-nature is originally complete....[47] Originally it exists and it is present now, irrespective of cultivation of the Way and sitting in meditation. Not cultivating and not sitting is the Tathāgata's pure meditation. If you now truly understand the real meaning of this, then do not create any karma. Content with your lot, pass your life. One bowl, one robe; whether sitting or standing, it is always with you. Keeping the precepts, you accumulate pure karma.[48]

In the same vein, in another of the sermons from *Mazu yulu* there is the following statement that also resembles section D of Zongmi's text: "If one realizes this mind, then one can always wear one's robes and eat one's food. Nourishing the womb of sagehood, one spontaneously passes one's time."[49]

A comprehensive account of Zongmi's evaluation of the Hongzhou School and comparison between his presentation of the Hongzhou School and the texts attributed to the Hongzhou School's leading teachers is beyond the scope of this study. For present purposes, it will suffice to note that the quotations presented above strongly suggest that Zongmi's writings provide a description of the Hongzhou School's teaching that is quite similar to that found in Mazu's sermons. It appears that Zongmi had read a copy of

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[45] MY, XZJ 119.406d; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 66.

[46] MY, XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 63.

[47] MY, XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 63.

[48] MY, XZJ 119.407a; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 68.

[49] XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 62.

Mazu's *yuben*, which included early versions of the extant sermons.[50] On the basis of the evidence provided by Zongmi's writings we can ascertain that transcripts of Mazu's sermons did circulate within a few decades after his death, at the latest.

In addition, in terms of their literary structure, their terminology, and their doctrinal contents, Mazu's sermons closely resemble some of the important records of his disciples' teachings that were compiled during the ninth century, such as Baizhang's *Guanglu* and Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao*. Many of the quotations and allusions to passages from the scriptures found in Mazu's sermons can also be found in the sermons of his disciples. Moreover, not only does Baizhang quote the same scriptures as Mazu, but the manner in which he quotes them is the same. Like his teacher, Baizhang quotes a variety of scriptures without mentioning their titles, seamlessly incorporating the quotes into his sermons without any indication about their origin.[51] On the basis of all of the above evidence—various quotations in the records of Mazu's disciples, correspondence with Zongmi's writings, and similarity with early records of Mazu's disciples—we can infer that the extant sermons are based on early editions that were in circulation few decades after Mazu's death at the latest. Although the evidence is not conclusive, we can further infer that the extant sermons are based on early editions of edited transcripts of various talks Mazu gave during his long teaching career.

***Origin of the dialogues***. The dialogues are the part of *Mazu yulu* whose provenance is most problematic. As it was the case with the sermons, there are no extant

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[50] The opposite, that the sermons were based on Zongmi's account, is extremely unlikely. The different versions of the sermons cannot all be based on Zongmi's text, which does not even directly attribute the above passage to Mazu. Moreover, texts such as ZTJ and ZJL would quote earlier sources directly, while paraphrasing and summarization of main ideas is a feature of Zongmi's text.

editions from the Tang period of any of the dialogues. Only a few of the dialogues can be found in pre-Song texts, and unlike the sermons—for which there is considerable evidence that indicates they are records of the teachings of Mazu, or at least edited redactions of his lectures compiled by his immediate disciples—there is no evidence whatsoever that confirms that any of the dialogues existed in either oral or written form during the Tang.

*Zutang ji* is the earliest text that includes any of Mazu's dialogues. However, even the biography of Mazu that appears in this mid-tenth century text includes only five of the thirty-two dialogues that appear in *Mazu yulu*, and on the whole its contents are quite different from those of *Mazu yulu*. *Zongjing lu*, the other Five Dynasties Chan text that includes Tang materials, contains all of Mazu's sermons, but it contains only one of his dialogues. *Chuandeng lu* includes some of Mazu's best-known dialogues, and is the earliest extant source that contains eleven of the dialogues found in *Mazu yulu*. Though there are only minor differences between these versions and the ones from *Mazu yulu*, on the whole it seems probable that the compiler of *Mazu yulu* used *Chuandeng lu* as one of his main sources.

As far as the provenance of the dialogues is concerned, there is no evidence to suggest that *any* of the dialogues that appear in *Mazu yulu* existed during the Tang. The earliest extant text in which a few of them appear, *Zutang ji*, was compiled in 952, 164 years after Mazu's death. The same is also true of the encounter dialogues of all other noted Hongzhou monks, including Baizhang, Huangbo, and Guishan. Though later Chan collections include many stories that contain iconoclastic interchanges in which these

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[51] See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 545. For additional discussion of their use of scriptural quotations, see Chapter Seven.

monks are the main protagonists, none of them appears in a text from the Tang period.[52] It is also interesting to note that Mazu's image as presented in *Zutang ji*, the oldest extant text that contains any of Mazu's dialogues, lacks the iconoclasm that permeates most of his records found in later collections, starting with his biography in *Chuandeng lu*.

The origins of the materials that constitute the three parts of *Mazu yulu* can be summarized as in Table 1 presented below. In order to achieve greater accuracy, each of the three sections that comprise *Mazu yulu* is further divided according to the following criteria: (1) the biographical sketch is divided into seven parts, each of which consists of essential information about Mazu's life—years of birth and death, birthplace, study with Huairang, teaching at Gonggong mountain, stay in Hongzhou, association with literati/officials, and disciples; (2) the number of sermons given as basis of comparison is three (based on *Mazu yulu*, although it should be noted that the total number of extant sermons is five, as *Zongjing lu* includes two additional sermons); (3) the extant dialogues are divided into thirty-two sections, following the division introduced in *Sun-Face Buddha*, my earlier translation of *Mazu yulu*. The approximate dates of the compilation of each text are given in parentheses, and the correspondences between the contents of a particular text and the relevant section of *Mazu yulu* are expressed as fractions.[53]

[52] As was already mentioned, there are dialogues in Baizhang's *Guanglu* and Hunagbo's *Chuanxin fayao*, but they are of the conventional dialogue format, not the iconoclastic Chan dialogues with which we are concerned here.

[53] The fractions that express the correlation between the texts listed on left and the appropriate parts of *Mazu yulu* are to be taken as only rough guides. The fractions do not reflect the differences between different versions found in various texts, nor do they take into account the actual length of individual sermons and dialogues.

Table 1. Origins of the materials that constitute the three parts of *Mazu yulu*

| Sources / Section → ↓ | Biog. sketch | Sermons | Dialogues |
|---|---|---|---|
| Baofeng monas. stone insc. (791) | 2/7 | 0 | 0 |
| Quan Deyu's inscription (791) | 7/7 | 0 | 0 |
| Biog. in *Baolin zhuan* (801) [only fragment extant] | 1/7 (7/7?) | 0 ( more?) | 0 |
| *Chanyuan duxu* and *Pei Xiu sheyiwen* (c. 830) | 2/7 | 3/3 (not direct correlation) | 0 |
| Biography in *Zutang ji* (952) | 5/7 | 1/3 | 5/32 |
| *Zongjinglu* (961) | 2/7 | 3/3 (+2) | 1 |
| Biog. in *Song gaoseng zhuan* (988) | 7/7 | 0 | 0 |
| Biog. in *Chuandeng lu* (1004) | 7/7 | 2/3 | 11/32 |
| *Mazu Yulu* (c. 1085) | 7/7 | 3/3 | 32/32 |

As we examine the data presented in the table, we should remember that the presence or absence of certain types of material in a given texts is of course not determined only by the date of its composition. The range of types of materials found in a given text is also in part determined by the conventions of the genre in which the text was composed. It is to be expected, for example, that a stele inscription will not contain a long sermon. Nonetheless, it is striking that none of the early sources from the Tang period contains a single dialogue. The fact that no encounter dialogues were created before the early ninth century is also collaborated by the contents of *Baolin zhuan.* While the crucial tenth fascicle that included Mazu's biography is lost, on the basis of the materials presented in the extant fascicles it appears that the text was composed before the onset of the encounter dialogue age. Indeed, I have not been able to find a single piece of

contemporary evidence to indicate that during the Tang period there was any awareness of such a thing as an encounter dialogue, let alone that it was Chan's main medium of religious instruction, as is assumed by current scholarship.

After the dialogues make their appearance in *Zutang ji*, their number gradually increases as the text's date of composition becomes later. Mazu's biography in *Chuandeng lu* contains only approximately 34 percent of the number of dialogues found in *Mazu yulu*. However, as the biographies of Mazu's disciples contain another eleven of the dialogues, that brings the number of dialogues to twenty-two, approximately 69 percent of the total found in *Mazu yulu*. Thus, the inclusion of dialogues, which started with Mazu's biography in *Zutang ji*, was further expanded in *Chuandeng lu*. From then on, virtually all later Song collections of Chan materials, such as *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* (compiled in 1029) and *Gu zunsu yulu* (compiled in 1178), continued to include the dialogues as the largest part of Mazu's record.[54] From this we can conclude that it was only from the tenth century onwards that stories that contain Mazu's and his disciples' iconoclastic dialogues came to shape the understanding of their religious thought and teaching methods.

**Sermons Versus Dialogues**

From the above analysis of *Mazu yulu*, it is clear that the contrasting images of Mazu that are presented in his sermons and his dialogues are due to the fact that each of these two types of literary sub-genres originated at completely different times, and thus each of them in a different way reflected the changing images of Tang Chan. Those images were

[54] For a convenient summary of the inclusion of Mazu's dialogues in these texts, see the table in Okimoto Katsumi 沖本克己, "Zen shisō keiseishi no kenkyū" 禪思想形成史の研究, in *Kenkyū Hōkoku* 研究報告 (Hanazono daigaku gokusai zengaku kenkyūjo, 1998), pp. 351–53.

continually refashioned in light of the distinct conceptions of Chan orthodoxy prevalent during the periods of their creation, and among the groups that produced them. The sermons' conservative image of Mazu as a rather traditional Buddhist teacher reflects the historical reality of his actual position as an abbot of a large official monastery in the southern part of the Tang empire. The iconoclastic image that we find in his dialogues, on the other hand, reflects the semi-mythologized depiction of him as a radical leader of a growing new movement that challenged the traditions of medieval Chinese Buddhism, and charted a path for the establishment of new Chan orthodoxy. The origins of these contrasting images become clearer when we consider how the different versions of the sermons and dialogues were created.

Most probably, the sermons presented in *Mazu yulu* were based on transcripts of Mazu's public addresses to his disciples. Unfortunately, we have no information about the actual circumstances of the recording of Mazu's sermons, nor do we have any information about the identity of the individual(s) who compiled and edited the transcripts. It is plausible that some of Mazu's numerous disciples took notes of their teacher's lectures. In one of his sermons Mazu exhorts his disciples that there is no need to record his words, a statements that seems to indicate that there were disciples who were taking notes during his lecture.[55]

The editors of the early *yuben* of noted Chan monks from the mid and late Tang periods are for the most part anonymous. There are a few notable exceptions where we have information about the compilation of specific texts, such as Huangbo's two records

[55] "All of you should penetrate your own minds; *do not record my words*. Even if principles as numerous as the sands of Ganges are spoken of, the mind does not increase. And if nothing is said, the mind does not decrease. When there is speech, it is just your own mind. If there is silence, it is still your own mind" (emphasis added). MY, XZJ 119.406b; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 65.

and short parts of Weikuan's 惟寬 (755–817) records. Most of Huangbo's extant sermons were recorded by Pei Xiu, who briefly described the compilation of the records in his preface to the collection of Huangbo's teachings.[56] Some of Weikuan's discussion with Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846) were recorded by Bo himself.[57] If we compare Mazu's sermons with those found in the records of Huangbo we find numerous stylistic similarities, as well as great overlap in vocabulary and manner of presentation. These similarities seems to indicate that the recording of Mazu's sermons probably involved a process similar to the one undertaken by Pei Xiu when he was recording Huangbo's sermons.

Nonetheless, the disconnected structure and the unexpressed thematic shifts found in a number of places in Mazu's sermons suggest that the sermons were not literal transcripts of talks given on single occasions. Most likely disciples' notes and transcripts of talks that were given by Mazu on various occasions were edited, and draft composite versions of the sermons that included passages from different transcripts of Mazu's lectures were composed. These early versions of his sermons were written down as representative examples of the teachings that Mazu often presented at his public addresses, rather than as word-for-word transcripts of particular lectures.

As these early versions of the sermons of Tang Chan teachers were included in the later Chan collections, occasionally they were slightly edited and revised, as can be seen from the variant extant editions. However, it is important to note that though the sermons purport to be records of oral discourses, once they were written down they became

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[56] For Pei's preface to Huangbo's records, see T 48.379b-c.

[57] For Bo's record of Weikuan's teachings see *Xijing xingshansi chuanfatang bei* 西京興善寺傳法堂碑, QTW 678.3070a.

literary records, and as such were much less exposed to alternation than oral narratives. It is apparent that most Tang Chan monks' sermons were written fairly early, while the monks who gave them were still alive. To this testify the similarity of the different versions of the sermons of most Chan monks associated with the Hongzhou School, including Mazu.

Whereas there were no significant changes in the various versions of the sermons of Tang Chan monks found in Chan collections, the situation with the dialogues was quite the opposite. Careful reading and comparison of different editions of the records of Tang monks reveal that often there are great changes and significant differences between the variant versions of the same encounter dialogue. For example, while the records of Linji's acts (*xinglu*), which consist mostly of encounter dialogues between him and his disciples, have quite dissimilar versions in various texts, there is hardly any difference among the several editions of his sermons. [58] Linji's sermons were fixed quite early, and there were no intentional additions to them as they were reproduced in later texts.[59] On the other hand, the contents of his dialogues were quite fluid, and they continued to be altered long after they were first written down.[60]

A good example of the changes that a particular encounter dialogue underwent is the well-known story of the meeting between Mazu and Baizhang. In the *Sijia yulu* version, this story follows immediately after the famous story of the wild duck (see below), and the two are presented as parts of a single larger story that supposedly

[58] For examples of very similar versions of one of Linji's sermons, see CDL 28.596, *Linji yulu*, T 48.497a-b, TGDL 11, XZJ 135.3445d–46c, and *Gu zunsu yulu* 4, XZJ 118.100d–101b. See also the discussion in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 545.

[59] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 570–71.

describes the events surrounding Baizhang's spiritual awakening. In Baizhang's biography in *Chuandeng lu*, however, the story stands by itself. This is by far the simplest, and most likely the earliest version of the story (though still a version that appears almost two centuries after Baizhang's death). In the later two versions, the story's contents are expanded and embellished considerably.

> [1] Mazu entered the Dharma hall, and the monks assembled. He sat on his seat for a while. The master then unfolded his bowing mat in front [of Mazu]. Mazu then left the hall.[61]
>
> [2] The next day as soon as Mazu entered the Dharma hall and seated himself, the master stepped forward and rolled up a bamboo mat (*dian* 簟). Mazu then left his seat, and the master followed him to the abbot's quarters. Mazu asked, "Concerning what just happened, why did you roll up the bamboo mat?" The master replied, "Because my nose hurts." Mazu asked, "Where did you go to?" The master said, "Yesterday there was going out and coming in; there is no need to pursue that." Mazu shouted, and the master left.[62]
>
> [3] The next day Mazu entered the hall, and the monks assembled together. The Master came forward and unrolled a mat (*xi* 席). Mazu then came down from his set, and the master followed him to the abbot's quarters. Mazu asked, "A while ago, why did you roll up the mat before I have said anything? The Master said, "Yesterday the Reverend grabbed my nose and it is hurting." Mazu said, "What did you pay attention to yesterday?" The Master said, "Today my nose does not hurt anymore." Mazu said, "You have very clearly comprehended yesterday's event." The master paid his respects and withdrew.[63]

What first appears in *Chuandeng lu* as a very brief exchange between Mazu and Baizhang (the first version) is later expanded into a more elaborate story. In the second version, the iconoclastic Mazu shouts (having the previous day violently pulled Baizhang's nose), but

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[60] An example of the changes a particular dialogue went through is the story of Linji's awakening under Huangbo, introduced later in this chapter.

[61] CDL 6.114 (Baizhang's biography).

[62] *Gu zunsu yulu*, XZJ 118.81c; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 100–01. There is another similar version in TGDL 8, XZJ 135.328a.

in the third version he is much more tame and restrained—he simply praises his student. In the last version Baizhang is similarly shown to be a well-mannered monk, who pays respect to his teacher before leaving his quarters.

The above exchange between Baizhang and Mazu, as well as most other dialogues found in Chan texts are usually presented as factual records of interactions between Chan teachers and their disciples. Often the exchanges take place in public forums, such as a lecture in a monastery hall, but not infrequently they take place in private settings in which only the main protagonists are present. It is extremely unlikely that all disciples who figure in the dialogues of the records of Mazu and other Hongzhou masters recorded their exchanges and discussions with their teachers. It is probable that the stories about Chan teachers' enlightened activity and interaction with their students, all of which are now extant only in post-Tang texts, emerged in the context of an oral tradition. Various stories about the words and deeds of the famous Chan teachers were told and retold numerous times, and passed on to other monastic communities by itinerant monks in the course of their travels and pilgrimages. In the transmission of the lamp histories and the records of sayings there are quite a few records of Chan monks telling about exchanges they have participated in or heard about from other monks. One such example from *Mazu yulu* is the dialogue between Mazu and Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰, in which the later informs Mazu about an encounter between him and Shitou.[64]

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[63] *Baizhang yulu*, in *Sijia yulu* 2, XZJ 119.409b-c; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 105, n. 8.

[64] "When Deng Ying-feng was about to leave the Patriarch (i.e. Mazu), the Patriarch asked him, 'Where are you going?' 'To Shitou.' replied Yinfeng. The Patriarch said, 'Shitou's path is slippery.' Yinfeng said, 'I will use my own skills to deal with the situation as it presents itself.' Then he left. As soon as he arrived in front of Shitou, he walked around the Chan seat once, stuck his staff on the ground, and asked, 'What is the meaning?' Shitou said, 'Heavens! Heavens!' Yinfeng was left speechless. He returned to the Patriarch and reported what has happened. The Patriarch said, 'Go back

A detailed study of the development of the classical Chan dialogue format—which can be approached both as a historical as well as a literary issue—is beyond the scope of the present work. That development for the most part took place after the Huichang era's persecution of Buddhism, a period with which we are not concerned in the present work. At present, research on the creation of Chan literature is still at the stage where we do not quite understand the psychological impulses and desires that stimulated the fabrication of these kind of stories. We also do we have enough knowledge about the ideological considerations that led to the proliferation of fictional encounter dialogues. It is also impossible to ascertain which stories were based on actual events, and which were products of monastic imagination. Having offered that caveat, let me briefly describe what seem the most probable scenario of the emergence of the encounter dialogues as a distinct literary sub-genre.

It is possible that some of the stories about Chan teachers' interactions with their disciples were based on actual events. But many of them were probably products of creative imagination, as is often the case with the legends about the exalted deeds of the saints found in religious literature. Prior to the time when they were first recorded, in the course of their oral dissemination the stories were often altered, as can be seen from the various versions of same dialogues found in literature that was created at different times and in different geographical areas. Moreover, older versions of the stories often inspired the creation of new stories. There are also quite a few instances when the same or similar saying or story is attributed in different texts to two completely different monks. One

to see him again. When he says, "Heavens! Heavens!" you make a deep sigh twice.' Yinfeng went back to Shitou and asked the same question as before. Shitou made a deep sigh twice. Yinfeng was left speechless again. He returned to the Patriarch and related what has happened. The Patriarch said, 'I told you that Shitou's path is slippery.'" XZJ 119.407d; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 74–75.

such example is the famous story about Baizhang and the wild duck. In the *Gu zunsu yulu* version Baizhang is the main character, and the story describes how he is led to religious awakening as a result of Mazu's unusual teaching.[65] However, in the version of the same story found in *Zutang ji* the main protagonists are Mazu and Wuxie 五洩 (i.e. Weizheng of Baizhang mountain 百丈山惟政), and Baizhang is not mentioned at all.[66]

It is apparent that because many the dialogues were originally created and transmitted as oral narratives, at an early stage of their historical development they had considerable fluidity and flexibility. This accounts for the proliferation of different versions of the same stories. Their recording as literary narratives was the second stage of their evolution, during which the sacred event described in these stories had to be recreated following the dictates of written records. It is also quite likely that at least some of the dialogues were literary creations from the very beginning, which had no basis whatsoever in actual events or earlier oral narratives.

The anonymous authors who first wrote down the dialogues had to provide brief descriptions of the situational contexts in which a particular exchange between a Chan teacher and his disciple(s) took place. The realism that characterizes these stories, many

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65 "One day as the Master (i.e. Baizhang) accompanied Mazu for a walk, they heard a cry of wild duck. Mazu asked, 'What kind of sound is that?' The Master replied, 'It is a cry of wild duck.' After a while, Mazu asked, 'Where has the sound gone?' The Master said, 'Flown away.' Mazu turned his head, grabbed the Master's nose, and pulled it. The Master cried with pain. Mazu said, 'And yet, you said it has flown away.' On hearing that, the Master had an insight...." *Gu zunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.81b-c; see also different version in TGDL 8, XZJ 135.328a.

66 "One day, as the great teacher (i.e. Mazu) led the monks out for a walk bellow the western wall, suddenly a wild duck flew by. The great teacher asked, 'What was that [flying] beside us?" Head monk Zheng (i.e. Wuxie) said, 'A wild duck.' The great master said, 'Where did it go?' [Zheng] replied, 'It flew away.' The great teacher grabbed and pulled head monk Zheng's ear(s). As the head monk cried in pain, the great master said, 'It is still here. Has it ever flown away?' Head monk Zheng all of a sudden experienced great awakening." ZTJ 15.333. See also related discussion about the meeting between Mazu and Baizhang in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 537–44.

of which read like carefully crafted stage drama, often contains such minute detail that it betrays them as works of fiction, since many of the details about the situational context and the subjective feelings of the participants could not have been known to the writer of the story.[67] Although it is possible that some of the stories had some basis in historical events, the majority of them were products of their authors' and transmitters' creative imagination that had no foundation in actual events that took place during the eight and ninth centuries.

### The Story of Wuye's Awakening

Some aspects of the evolution of the dialogues and the changes they underwent in the course of their transmission can be illustrated by comparing variant versions of the same story found in texts written at different times. It is often apparent that the same dialogue was changed in ways that reflect the changing beliefs of the Chan School, or the sectarian needs of late Chan groups. It appears that monks associated with particular factions transformed earlier narratives in ways that would lend support to their claims about the spiritual legitimacy of their lineage. Often the image of a past Chan teacher was reshaped so that it would conform to a new pattern of "exemplary" Chan religiosity that reflected the religious concerns and ideological requirements of these later Chan factions. The easiest way to achieve that transformation was to rewrite earlier dialogues in which that particular teacher was a participant, or to create entirely new dialogues in which he acted and spoke in ways that accorded with the religious ideas and sectarian predilections of the later Chan writers.

To illustrate the changes introduced in the different versions of same Chan

[67] Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice," p. 153.

encounter dialogue, let us examine the story of Wuye's 無業 (761–823) meeting with Mazu. What follows are translations of two extant versions of this story presented next to each other, divided into sections for an easy comparison. Parts of the story that are identical (or differ only in unimportant details) in both versions are boldfaced. The version on the right is from *Mazu yulu*,[68] while the version on the left is from Wuye's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*.[69] As we compare the two versions, it should be born in mind that the left version is earlier, and it appears in a text that is much more reliable source of historical information.

Table 2. Two versions of the dialogue between Mazu and Wuye

| | |
|---|---|
| [A1] Later, [when **Wuye**] heard that **Daji** (i.e., Mazu) of Hongzhou was the leader of the Chan School, he went there to see him and pay his respects. Wuye's **body** was six feet tall and it stood magnificently like a mountain. His gaze had a determined expression, and the sound of **his voice was like a bell**. As soon as he saw him, Daji smiled and **said, "Such an imposing Buddha hall, but no Buddha in it.**" | [A2] When Chan teacher **Wuye** of Fenzhou went to see the **Patriarch** (i.e. Mazu), the Patriarch noticed that his **appearance** was extraordinary and that **his voice was like** [the sound of] **a bell.** He **said, "Such an imposing Buddha hall, but no Buddha in it.**" |
| [B1] **Wuye respectfully kneeled down, and said,** "As to **the texts which contain the teachings of the three vehicles, I have been able to roughly understand their meaning. I have also heard about the teaching of the Chan School that mind is Buddha, and this is something that I have not yet been able to understand.**" | [B2] **Wuye respectfully kneeled down, and said,** "I have studied **the texts that contain the teachings of the three vehicles** and **have been able to roughly understand their meaning. I have also often heard about the teaching of the Chan School that mind is Buddha, and this is something I have not yet been able to understand.**" |

[68] XZJ 119.407d; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 74.

[69] SGSZ 11, T 50.772b–c; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 90, n. 52. Still another version of the same dialogue can be found in ZTJ 14.308.

| | |
|---|---|
| [C1] **Daji said, "This very mind that does not understand is it; there is nothing else**. When there is no realization, it is ignorance; with realization it is awakening. Ignorance is sentient being; awakening is the Buddha's Way. Without leaving sentient beings, how could there be any Buddha? It is like making a fist with one's hand—the fist is the hand!" | [C2] **The Patriarch said, "This very mind that does not understand is it. There is no other thing**." |
| | [D2] Wuye further asked. "What is the mind-seal that the Patriarch [Bodhidharma] secretly transmitted from the West?" The Patriarch said, "The Venerable looks rather disturbed right now. Go and come some other time." |
| [E1] On hearing this **Wuye experienced awakening**. He wept sorrowfully, and told Daji, "Before I used to think that the Buddha's Way is broad and distant, and that it can be realized only after many eons of effort and suffering. Today for the first time I realized that the true reality of the *dharmakāya* is originally completely present in oneself. All the myriad dharmas are created by the mind and are names only, devoid of any reality." | [E2] As Wuye was just about to step out, the Patriarch called him, "Venerable!" Wuye turned his head and the Patriarch asked him, "What is it?" [On hearing this] **Wuye experienced awakening**. |
| [F1] **Daji said**, "That is so. The nature of all dharmas is neither born nor perishable. All dharmas are fundamentally empty and quiescent. The sūtras say that 'all dharmas are from the very beginning of the character of extinction [Nirvāna].' They also say that they are 'the house of ultimate emptiness and quiescence,' and that 'emptiness is the seat of all dharmas.' This is to say that all the Buddhas, *Tathāgatas*, dwell in this abode of non-dwelling. If one has this understanding, then one dwells in the house of emptiness and quiescence, and sits on the seat of emptiness. Whether lifting the foot or putting it down, one never leaves the site | [F2] He bowed to the **Patriarch**, who **said**, "This stupid fellow! What is this bowing all about?" |

| |
|---|
| of enlightenment. If upon receiving instructions one has realization, then there is no gradualness; without moving the foot, one ascends to the mountain of Nirvāna." |

The basic "plot" of the story is quite typical: the young Wuye goes to receive Mazu's teachings and becomes enlightened by him. Until the beginning of section C both versions are very similar. Yet, from that point onwards they present two contrasting images of the Chan search for and experience of spiritual awakening. The earlier version from Wuye's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* (presented on the left side), presents a fairly conservative description of Mazu's teachings. This version of the story lacks the dramatic pathos we expect to find in Chan stories. It simply presents Mazu as a skilled teacher who instructs his student by offering him rather commonplace doctrinal explanations—complete with scriptural quotations, very much in the style of a traditional Buddhist teacher. This version of the story also portrays Wuye as equally prone to verbosity. It includes a passage that reveals the intellectual content of Wuye's spiritual realization, which consists of a realization of the immanence of the true reality of *dharmakāya* (the true body of the Buddha) within oneself. All these are hardly ideas that were unique to the Chan School.

In contrast, the later version of the story (presented on the right side) portrays Wuye as being enlightened by Mazu in a direct and immediate way without resort to traditional forms of religious instruction or doctrinal explanations. The unusual form of religious "training" presented in this story is very much in harmony with popular depictions of the distinctive Chan teaching methods that supposedly included the calling

student's name as a means to induces religious insight.[70]

The contents of the second version of the story also give rise to doubts about its authenticity. It is strange, for example, that Wuye, who in section B describes himself an outsider to the Chan School, asks for religious instruction by employing the standard question about Bodhidharma's mythic transmission of the mind-seal of enlightenment to China. This formulaic question, which often appears as a set expression in Song Chan texts, is a typical example of Chan "insider talk," not a question of an outsider such as Wuye, who comes to meet a Chan teacher for the first time. Moreover, it is also strange that Wuye, who prior to his coming to Mazu's monastery had undertaken extensive study of the Buddhist canon, would be unfamiliar with the doctrine about the identity of mind and Buddha. Though the authors of this and other similar Chan stories tried to appropriate this doctrine as being unique to the Chan School, by the mid-Tang period the theory of the intrinsic identity of the mind of the Buddha was very much an integral part of the mainstream doctrinal outlook of Chinese Buddhism. It is highly improbable that an educated monk well versed in Buddhist doctrine, such as Wuye, would not have been familiar with it.

It is apparent that this later version of the story is not a record of an encounter between two eight-century monks. Rather, it is a record of the change of the image of the classical Chan tradition during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The central feature of that change was the transformation of Mazu and his disciples into radical iconoclasts, which was accomplished by altering earlier stories in the way I just indicated, or by creating

[70] Calling of a student's name is usually described as one of the unconventional teaching methods—which also included beating, asking enigmatic questions, remaining silent, and the like—that according to Yanagida and other scholars were developed by the Hongzhou School. Such methods

completely new fictional stories.

**Transformations of Huangbo's Religious Personae**

Another example of the radicalization of the image of a noted Tang Chan teacher are the portrayals of Huangbo in the records of his disciple Linji. Like in the case of the story about Wuye's meeting with Mazu, those portrayals were ostensibly fashioned in ways that met the needs of a later Chan tradition to modify the images of Huangbo and other noted Chan teachers who were alive during the Tang Period. In Pei Xiu's preface to *Chuanxin fayao*, Huangbo is described in the following manner: "His words were simple, his reasoning direct, his way of life exalted and his habits unlike the habits of other men. Disciples hastened to him from all quarters, looking up to him as to a lofty mountain, and through their contact with him awoke to Reality."[71] The impression one gets from this short description, as well as from reading the records of Huangbo's sermons and conversations with his disciples, is that he was a mild-mannered monk who exhibited many of the spiritual qualities traditionally associated with mainstream Buddhist conceptions of holiness. Since Pei Xiu personally knew Huangbo quite well, his account of Huangbo's character is by far the most reliable source of information we have.

In *Linji yulu*, however, this image of Huangbo undergoes a complete transformation. According to this text, when the young Linji went to ask Huangbo for religious instruction, instead of offering him an insightful discourse about Chan doctrine or practice, as he is described doing by Pei Xiu, Huangbo beat Linji. The same thing

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were supposedly an expression of the original style of uniquely Chinese religiosity introduced by Mazu and his followers.

[71]T 48.379c; English translation from John Blofeld, trans., *The Zen Teaching of Huangbo on the Transmission of Mind*, pp. 27–28.

happened twice more, much to the distress of the young Linji, who failed the discern the rationale behind Huangbo's unconventional "teaching methods."[72] The further radicalization of Huangbo's image is also evident in the following story:

> As Linji was digging earth during a period of communal work, when he saw Huangbo coming he stopped the work and stood leaning on the mattock. Huangbo said, "Is this guy tired?" Linji said, "I have not yet even lifted my mattock. Why should I be tired?" Huangbo hit him. Linji grabbed the stick, struck Huangbo with it, and knocked him down. Huangbo called the supervisor (*karmadāna*), "Supervisor, please help me to get up." The supervisor came, and as he was helping Huangbo to get up, he said, "Reverend, how can you allow this lunatic to behave so rudely?" As soon as Huangbo got up to his feet, he hit the supervisor. Digging the earth, Linji said, "Everywhere the dead are cremated, but here I bury them alive at once."[73]

The version of Linji's training under Huangbo found in *Zutang ji*—which was written almost exactly a century after the recording of *Chuanxin fayao* and a century before *Linji yulu*—illustrates the mid-point of the transformation of Huangbo's image. In this text's version of the story about Linji's early study with Huangbo, Huangbo neither beats the young Linji nor subjects him to any unconventional teaching devices. Instead, after he hears Huangbo's praise of Dayu 大愚, a disciple of Mazu who at the time lives as a hermit, Linji goes to see this monk. Linji's first visit to Dayu is not very successful. As soon as the two meet, Dayu pushes Linji out of the room, and then closes the door right in front of his nose. During his second visit to Dayu, he is treated even worse. Dayu hits him with a stick, and then pushes him out of the door. Yet, we are told that this rough treatment somehow catalyzed Linji's experience of religious awakening. At the end of the

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[72] T 47.504c; Ruth Fuller Sasaki et al., trans., *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Linji Hui-chao of Chen Prefecture*, p. 50.

[73] T 47.505a; translation adapted from Sasaki, trans., *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Linji*, p. 53.

story, as Linji return to Huangbo and reports about his experience, his overjoyed teacher responds by doing what he is described as doing in earlier texts: talking.[74]

The stories about Linji's study with Huangbo presented in *Linji yulu* illustrate the efforts of the Song Linji School to refashion a new image of Huangbo. Instead of calmly sitting at the abbot's high seat and lecturing to his monks about the truths of Buddhism and the practice of the Chan way, as he is described doing in the earliest records, in *Linji lu* Huangbo is portrayed as engaging in pithy, seemingly eccentric exchanges with his students. The saintly monk from Pei Xiu's writings is suddenly transformed into a charismatic iconoclast who does not hesitate to use his staff, and who is outdone in his forcefulness and fortitude only by Linji, his best student.[75]

*Linji yulu* was compiled by the nascent Linji School during the Northern Song dynasty, a period during which it was beginning to emerge from a minor lineage into the main school of Chan. One of the main purposes of this text was to raise the stature of Linji, from that of a relatively obscure ninth century monk to that of the rightful heir of the great Mazu and progenitor of the orthodox school of Song Chan. In order to achieve that goal, the compilers of *Linji lu* added stories about Linji's remarkable behavior that would depict him as a dynamic leader of a exceptional religious tradition, who excelled in the spontaneous use of creative and unconventional means of religious expression. In order to achieve that goal, they also had to re-formulate the image of Linji's teacher, Huangbo, so that he too would fit into the same pattern of iconoclastic religious behavior.

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[74] ZTJ 19.428–29 (K 45.353c–54a). See also Yanagida Seizan, "The Life of Linji I-hsüan," *The Eastern Buddhist* 5/2 (1972), p. 76.

[75] See Yanagida, "Goroku no Rekishi," pp. 559–60. For more stories that illustrate Huangbo's portrayal in *Linji lu*, see T 47.504b–505b; and Sasaki, trans., *The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Linji*, pp. 50–56.

## Creation of Iconoclastic Depictions of Classical Chan

What were the impulses and circumstances that led to the canonization of the encounter dialogues stories about great Chan teachers' spontaneous interactions with their disciples? Unfortunately, at the present stage of research into Chan history and literature, this is a question that cannot be answer in a satisfactory manner. There is much that we do not know about the transformations that Chan underwent during the Tang-Song transition. That is especially true of the crucial Five Dynasties period, which has hardly received any sustained scholarly scrutiny.[76] In the preceding pages I simply highlighted the large discrepancy between the idealized depictions of the Hongzhou School and the rest of classical Chan found in the Song transmission chronicles and records of sayings on the one hand, and the earlier sources of information about mid-Tang Chan on the other. What remains to be done is to trace the evolution of the changing images of classical Chan, the main focus of which will have to be on the tenth century, a period that is well beyond the time-frame I am concerned with in the present study.

Here I can only point out that probably the encounter dialogue stories were for the first time canonized as central elements of the traditional lore about the Tang "golden age" of Chan with their appearance in the great Chan histories that were compiled during the early Song dynasty, having made their first appearance few decades earlier in Chan texts such as *Zutang ji*. The early Song was also the time when the famous *gongan* (or *koan* in Japanese) collections were created, and when meditation on these stories was emerging as the main contemplative practice of Chan. These developments coincided

[76] One of the rare exceptions is Albert Welter study of Yanshou, *The Meaning of Myriad Good Deeds: A Study of Yung-ming Yen-shou and Wan-shan t'ung-kuei chi*. In the future, I plan to undertake a study of the history of Chan during this period that will focus on Fayan Wenyi and his Fayan School 法眼宗 of Chan.

with the Chan School's consolidation of its position as main Buddhist orthodoxy. That process already started during the Five Dynasties, when monks like Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃(864–949) and Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益(885–958) received extensive patronage from the rulers of Southern Han (907–971) and Southern Tang (937–975), respectively. The consolidation of Chan as the main mainstream of Buddhism was further enhanced when the early Song rulers elevated the status of Chan to what was tantamount to an official Buddhist orthodoxy of their newly reunified empire. All these developments created pressures to produce coherent narratives of Chan's historical origins that gave support to Chan School's claims of religious superiority. By highlighting the apocryphal accounts of great Tang teachers' lively exchanges with their students as the main records of Chan religiosity, the tenth and eleventh century writers and editors fashioned a new image of classical Chan. It was in the context of such the early Song ideological milieu, dominated by sectarian polemics and increased concern with defining religious orthodoxy, that the radical image of mid-Tang Chan was finally canonized, and the iconoclasm emblematic of the encounter dialogue stories emerged as a paradigmatic model of Chan School's soteriology.

The creation of the encounter dialogues and their eventual canonization was a process that resembled myth-making, disguised as creation of historical narratives. The result was emerging popularity of semi-mythical narratives in which the images of historical persons like Mazu and his prominent disciples were refashioned into semi-divine heroes who created the orthodox tradition of Chan, and thus supposedly transmitted the mystical essence of the Buddha's enlightenment. The results of that transformation were quite successful, given that to a large extent those idealized images of unconventional spiritual heroes continued to shape the perceptions of classical Chan

throughout the last millennium.

## Concluding Remarks

Each of the three main styles of narrative discourse found in Chan monks' records of sayings—biographical sketches, sermons, and encounter dialogues—was a product of different set of historical circumstances, had a different literary history, and revealed a different dimension of Chan's conception of religious doctrinc, practice, and experience. The analysis presented above demonstrates that while there is substantial evidence to show that the sermons and biographies of prominent members of the Hongzhou School were recorded during the Tang period, there is no proof whatsoever that any of their encounter dialogues were written down before the mid-tenth century. This finding highlights the serious problems that arise from the use of the encounter dialogues as sources of information about classical Chan. Because these stories dominate current interpretations of Chan, virtually all depictions of the history and teachings of its classical traditional are based on questionable interpretations of the wrong kind of textual sources. Most of the prevalent misunderstandings of the doctrines, practices, and institutions of Mazu's Hongzhou School stem from the fact that studies of mid-Tang Chan place undue emphasis on the apocryphal dialogues found in later strata of Chan literature, and gloss over or ignore those earlier sources that do not accord with entrenched views about classical Chan.

The establishment of religious canons, like the Chan canon, is an act of defining the basic identity of a religious tradition and establishing the parameters of its orthodoxy. Canon formation usually involves somewhat arbitrary delineation of the historical origins and essential teachings of a particular tradition. That same process often obscures the

complex historical processes that led to the creation of a particular canon. That a major portion of the Chan canon is in a sense forgery should perhaps not come as a total surprise to students of Buddhism. The history of Buddhism in both India and China was a history of production of new texts whose origins were concealed by attributing them to the Buddha or to other noted exponents of his teachings. Such were the origins of the Indian Mahayana scriptures, as well as the numerous apocryphal scriptures and treatises composed in China. Similar situation obtains in other religious traditions, where critical textual research has repeatedly shown that traditional accounts about the origins of sacred texts are, from a historiographic perspective at least, not quite accurate.

Going back to the encounter dialogue stories that were quoted in the preceding pages, although they might present appealing depictions of direct and seemingly spontaneous transmission of the Chan truth, as they probably has nothing to do with monks like Shuilao, Baizhang, Wuye, and Mazu, the stories should not be used as source of data about their religious beliefs and practices. Moreover, we also have to let go of the hold stories of this kind have on our imagination. That includes resisting the tendency to interpret other textual sources that bear direct historical relevance to Mazu and classical Chan in light of the popular depictions of Chan iconoclasm that are based on such apocryphal stories. Such a new way of looking at Chan literature paves the way for a deconstruction of the mythos of Chan's/Zen's uniqueness, which permeates both scholarly and popular presentations of Chan/Zen. It might be true that the notion that Chan monks could become enlightened by being kicked in their chest might appeal to those who are attracted to presentations of such unbridled and exuberant religiosity. Such stories depict a kind of strange and exhilaratingly direct spirituality that seems to be divorced from the usual, occasionally stifling, paraphernalia that accompanies established

religion, and as an additional bonus holds the promise of quick spiritual enlightenment that can be achieved without expenditure of great effort. The problem with these idealized images is that they are little more than illusions, because they are divorced from the realities of the religious lives of the monks they supposedly depict.

I should point out, however, that my critique of the use of the encounter dialogue stories as sources of historical information about classical Chan need not be understood as belittlement of the stories themselves. Their enduring popularity attests to their broad appeal as idealized portrayals of certain religious ideals. The point I stress is that although the dialogues are important for understanding the Five Dynasties and Song Chan tradition's mythologized depiction of its origins during the Tang period, they are completely inappropriate as sources of information about Mazu and the other monks who appear in them.

As noted at the outset of Chapter One, my investigation of the provenance of Chan texts had as its main purpose to establish the value of their contents as historical sources. Understanding of how these texts were created is a prelude to the study of the broader issues that are pertinent to our enhanced understanding of the evolution of the Hongzhou School and its place in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Having thus concluded the present examination of Chan literature, in the next chapter I will turn my attention to the lives of the monks who shaped the history of the Hongzhou School.

Chapter 3

# *Biography of Mazu Daoyi*

The rise to prominence of the Hongzhou School 洪州宗 was due foremost to the immense influence of its leader Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788). Because of Mazu's great impact on the direction Chan Buddhism took at a crucial stage of its historical development, Mazu is usually considered one of the main persons responsible for the establishment of Chan as the main tradition of elite Chinese Buddhism. Considering Mazu's pivotal role in the formation of the classical Chan tradition, in order to properly evaluate the historical impact of the Hongzhou School and ascertain the forces that shaped the development of its religious ideas, doctrines, and practices, we must first examine the life of Hongzhou School's illustrious founder.

Temporally, the story of Mazu's life takes us through one of the most fascinating periods of medieval Chinese history. The story starts during the years of political turmoil that followed the end of Empress Wu's 武后 (r. 690–705) usurpation of the Tang throne, while most of its early and middle parts coincide with the long reign of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756), which was marked by unrivaled economic prosperity, political stability, and military power. The end of the middle part of Mazu's life was concurrent with the political and social turmoil that was caused by the An Lushan 安祿山 (d. 757) rebellion (755–763), an epoch-making event which for a time threatened the very existence of the Tang state. The final part of the story takes us to the early post-rebellion period, a time of momentous political, social, economic, and intellectual change.

During the reigns of emperors Daizong 代宗 (763–780) and Dezong 德宗 (780–805), Tang China saw the creation of a state and society that were quite different from the ones that existed before the rebellion.[1]

Spatially, the story of Mazu's life begins in the provincial world of Hanzhou 漢州 in the remote province of Sichuan 四川, at the western edge of the Tang empire on the border with the Tibetan highlands. Its middle part takes us to long travels over the mountains and towns of the Jiangnan 江南 (lit. "South of the [Long] River") area, a region that corresponds roughly to the present-day provinces of Hunan 湖南, Jiangxi 江西, Zhejiang 浙江, and parts of Jiangsu 江蘇 and Fujian 福建. This was an area that did not play central political, economic, or cultural roles in the development of earlier Chinese civilization, especially when compared with Northern China. During the early Tang, Jiangnan was still considered to be a relatively underdeveloped provincial region. However, during the later Tang period this area came to play an increasingly important role in the economic and cultural life of the Chinese empire. This change was partly related to the demographic shifts occasioned by large transfers of population from the North to the South during the time of the An Lushan rebellion and its aftermath. At that time, the South received an influx of refugees who were fleeing or were displaced by the fighting in the North. The change in Jiangnan's status was also due to the increasing importance of the southern provinces as the most reliable source of stable tax revenue for the central government after the loss of effective governmental control over great areas in the Northeast. Finally, the story of Mazu's life ends in Hongzhou, a prefecture in the north of Jiangxi where he peacefully passed his final years as an important regional

[1] The post-rebellion period as the historical setting for Hongzhou School's emergence is discussed in the Introduction.

religious leader and a successful teacher surrounded by a large number of devoted disciples.

### Note on the Sources about Mazu's Life

The contemporary historian who attempts to write about the lives of Chan monks who lived during the mid-Tang period is faced with a paucity of contemporaneous sources. Most of the sources about the history of Tang Chan were composed after the end of the Tang dynasty, and they contain a substantial amount of information that is of questionable value as data for a historical study. Moreover, even when there are relatively early sources, the literary conventions of the genres in which these documents were written present considerable difficulties for the contemporary scholars who aim to present fuller biographical reconstruction of their subjects' lives and religious careers. As was noted in Chapter One, medieval religious texts that contain biographical materials about noted Buddhist monks almost invariably focus only on events in their subjects' lives that were established as worthy of recording by the conventions of the genres in which they were written. Moreover, some of the earliest and most valuable sources, such as the stele inscriptions (*beiming* 碑銘) written for noted Chan monks, were usually recorded or commissioned by communities of monks who were for the most part composed of disciples of the deceased monk, and who often wanted to promote an idealized image of their teacher. The glorification of the deceased monk's life and his accomplishments was no doubt often motivated by genuine religious piety and feelings of personal devotion on part of the surviving disciples. At the same time, sometimes there were probably other concerns that influenced the writing of these documents. For example, the embellishment of a deceased monk's biography and the inflation of his importance also enhanced the image of the community he left behind, and improved the community's status among its

present and prospective supporters, including the Tang state. Because of such concerns, when using these sources special attention has to be given to the circumstances of their creation, and to the history of their subsequent transmission.

The main extant sources for the study of Mazu's life are as follows (listed in a chronological order):

1. A short stone inscription that was discovered in 1966 underneath Mazu's memorial pagoda—named Da Zhuangyan pagoda 大莊嚴塔—located on the grounds of Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺 in Jingan county 靖安縣, Jiangxi province. The inscription was composed in 791, three years after Mazu's death, at the occasion of the formal opening of the memorial pagoda.[2]
2. The text of Mazu's stele inscription. The inscription was composed by Quan Deyu 權德輿(759–818) in 791,[3] and its full title is *Tang gu Hongzhou Kaiyuansi Shimen Daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu* 唐故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師碑銘并序.[4] An

[2] The full text of the inscription is as follows: "On the seventeenth day of the seventh month of the seventh year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 reign of the Tang (August 21, 791) a pagoda was build at this location for the golden relics of the great master, Rev. Daoyi. The great master entered Nirvana on the first day of the second month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan reign (March 13, 788). Recorded on that occasion by the Hongzhou governor Li Jian 李兼, the magistrate of Jiangzhang county 建昌縣 Li Qi 李啓, the disciples from Falin monastery 法林寺 in Shimen 石門, and others." For the discovery of the inscription and its contents, see Chen Baiquan 陈柏泉, "Mazu chanshi shihan tiji yu Zhang Zongyan tianshi kuanji" 马祖禅师石函题记与张宗演天师圹记, *Wenshi* 文史 14 (1982), p. 258.

[3] More information about Quan will be provided in the discussion of Mazu's lay supporters presented towards the end of this chapter.

[4] There are three extant editions of Mazu's stele inscription, preserved in the following collections: QTW 501.5106a–07a, *Tang wenzui* 唐文粹 64.1058–59, and *Quanzai zhi wenji* 權載之文集 28.167a–68a. The three editions are quite similar. For the most part the differences between them are minor, and appear to be mostly due to copyists' errors. *Tang wenzui*'s edition is reproduced and rendered into Japanese *yomikudashi* 讀み下し reading in Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高, trans., *Baso no goroku* 馬祖の語錄, pp. 212–14, which unfortunately is not accompanied by a modern Japanese translation. *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 26.1190, lists a slightly different title of the stele inscription, and

annotated translation of this inscription can be found in Appendix 1 of the present dissertation.

3. The memorial inscription written by Mazu's contemporary Bao Ji 包佶 (d.u.), the duke (*gong* 公) of Danyang 丹陽, which was probably composed soon after Mazu's death. Though the original text is no longer extant, some of its contents are most probably preserved in Mazu's biography in Zanning's 贊寧 (919–1001) *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, compiled in 988 (see below).[5]
4. Mazu's biography in *Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳, composed in 801. Unfortunately the last (tenth) fascicle of this text, which included Mazu's biography, is lost, and only few brief fragments from Mazu's biography are still extant.[6] Nonetheless, as the compilers of both *Zutang ji* and *Chuandeng lu* probably used this work as a source for their biographies of Chan monks, it is possible that Mazu's biographies presented in these texts do include some parts from the lost biography in *Baolin zhuan*.
5. Mazu's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, which is primarily based on Quan Deyu's and Bao Ji's stele inscriptions mentioned above.
6. Zongmi's 宗密 (780–841) writings, especially his *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 圓覺經大疏鈔 (fascicle 3b) and *Pei Xiu sheyi wen* 裴休拾遺文 (often referred to as *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu* 中華傳心地禪門師資承襲圖,

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seems to indicate that the original stele still existed during the Southern Song period, when this text was composed by Wang Xiang 王象. *Yudi jisheng* lists the title as *Gu Hongzhou Kaiyuansi Shimen Daoyi chanshi daming* 故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師塔銘.

[5] SGSZ 10, T 50.766a-c.

[6] The contents of the last two missing fascicles of BLZ are discussed in Shiina Kōyū's 椎名宏雄 two articles, "*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū" 寶林傳逸文の研究, KDBR 11 (1980), pp. 234–57; and "*Hōrinden* makikyū makiju no itsubun" 寶林傳卷九卷十の逸文, SK 22 (1980), pp. 191–98.

following a mistaken reconstruction of its title by the *Zokuzōkyō* 續藏經 editors).[7]

7. Mazu's biography in *Zutang ji* 祖堂集. This text includes some interesting hagiographic materials not found in any of the other sources.[8]

Among the other extant Chan texts that were composed during the tenth century, Yongming Yanshou's 永明延壽 (904–975) *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (compiled in 961) includes some of the earliest extant editions of Mazu's sermons (including two sermons that are not preserved in any other source), but it does not contain any valuable biographical information.[9] All Song texts that belong to the transmission of the lamp genre, beginning with Daoyuan's *Jingde chuandeng lu*, also contain biographical materials about Mazu.[10] For the most part, however, they do not include any information that is not already found in the earlier sources described above, and when they do provide additional pieces of biographical data their provenance and accuracy are usually suspect.

Additional sources of information about Mazu's life are the biographies of his disciples. The earliest data of this kind can be found in his disciple's extant stele inscriptions that were composed during the early ninth century. Pertinent information is also included in the biographies of his disciples recorded in *Zutang ji* and *Song gaoseng zhuan*. Lastly, information about the people and the sites connected with Mazu can be found in the local gazetteers of the areas where he resided, especially in gazetteers from

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[7] XZJ 14.279a-b, and XZJ 110.434b-d, respectively.

[8] ZTJ 14.304–09.

[9] See T 48.418b, 492a, 550c, and 940b. ZJL contains numerous quotations from earlier Chan text (including sermons of important Hongzhou School figures), some of which are no longer extant. This text is also important for documenting the changes in Chan attitudes and perceptions that were taking place during the Five Dynasties period, including the perceptions of Mazu, Shitou, and their disciples. For a handy listing of the quotations from the records of Hongzhou monks found in ZJL see Yanagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," pp. 38–39.

his native Sichuan, and from Jiangxi, where he spend the second half of his life. Although usually this kind of information is quite late, these local sources provide some data about the history of the religious sites and local traditions that came to be associated with Mazu, and provide insights about Mazu's religious stature in the local communities where he and his disciples were active.

Among the texts described above, by far the most important single source is Quan Deyu's stele inscription. Written only three years after Mazu's death by a noted official who had personal connections with Mazu and his disciples, this short literary piece is the earliest and most reliable account of Mazu's life. Though it was written two centuries after his death, Mazu's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* is also important because, as noted above, it is based on early sources. The story of Mazu's life told in the following pages for the most part follows the outline of his life presented in these two texts, which had been supplemented with additional relevant information drawn from the other sources introduced above.[11] Though the extant information about Mazu's life leaves large gaps in his biography and tells us virtually nothing about his private persona, when all available sources are put together it is still possible to write a general biographical outline of Mazu's life and his religious activities, and to assess his place in the world of mid-Tang Buddhism.

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[10] See CDL 6.104–06.

[11] The most complete Japanese study of Mazu's life is Nishiguchi Yoshio 西口芳男, "Baso no denki" 馬祖の傳記, ZK 63 (1984), pp. 111–46, to which I am greatly indebted for the preparation of this chapter. Other relevant Japanese studies which I have consulted are: Ui Hakujū 宇井伯壽, *Zenshū shi kenkyū* 禪宗史研究, vol. 1, pp. 377–96; Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄, *Tō-godai zenshū shi* 唐五代禪宗史, pp. 369–88, and Idem, *Tō-godai no zenshū* 唐五代の禪宗, pp. 114–23; Ishikawa Rikisan 石川力山, "Baso kyōdan no tenkai to sono shijishatachi" 馬祖教團の展開とその支持者達, KDBR 2 (1971), pp. 160–73, and Idem, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen" 馬祖禪の形成一側面,

In order to make up for the brevity of the extant sources, I have made an effort to elucidate important aspects of Mazu's career that are glossed over by his medieval biographers by including relevant information about his early teachers in Sichuan, the sites and monasteries where he resided, and the officials and literati with whom he was in frequent contact and whose patronage was one of the main sources of support for his monastic community. By describing the religious and social contexts in which he operated, the people with whom he was close or with whom he interacted, and the institutions with which he was associated, the present chapter attempts to present as detailed picture of Mazu's life as it is possible to construct from the extant sources.

## Early Years in Sichuan

Mazu was born in 709, during the brief reign of emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 705–710), in Sifang 什邡 county in Hanzhou.[12] Hanzhou was located in Jiannan 劍南 province (as

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SK 13 (1971), pp. 105–110; and Yanagida Seizan, "Basozen no sho mondai," IBK 17/1, pp. 33–41, and Idem, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 335–49.

[12] The date of Mazu's birth is extrapolated from the information about the date of his death presented in the stone inscription from Baofeng monastery, and the information about his age recorded in his stele inscription. With the exception of the QTW edition of his stele inscription, all other sources—including the *Tangwenzui* and *Quanzai zhi wenji* editions of the stele inscription—are in agreement with the Baofeng stone inscription concerning the year of Mazu's death: the second month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan 貞元 era (788). All editions of the stele inscription also state that he died when he was eighty years old (according to Chinese reckoning, which means that he was seventy-nine years old at the time), which would place his birth in 709. The QTW edition of the stele inscription, however, states that he died in fourth month of the second year of the Zhenyuan era (786), which would mean that he was born in 707. Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshūshi*, pp. 369–71, presents a long argument to demonstrate that the QTW edition is mistaken about the year of Mazu's death. Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 112, also argues that the date in the QTW edition was probably deliberately changed by the QTW editor in order to make it correspond to another mistaken date about Mazu's final instructions to Li Jian. Suzuki's and Nishiguchi's long arguments about Mazu's dates are redundant, since the stone inscription from Baofeng monastery (of which Nishiguchi is unaware), the most exact and reliable source, clearly states that Mazu died during the fourth year of the Zhenyuan

Sichuan was known during the early eight century), just north of the provincial capital.[13] His family's surname was Ma; later, in recognition of his status as arguably the greatest Chan teacher of his era, he came to be called Mazu (lit. "Patriarch Ma").[14] According to Quan Deyu's stele inscription, Mazu's family had resided in the Hanzhou area for many generations.[15] We do not have reliable information about his family's socioeconomic background, but a reference in the stele inscription to his study of the Confucian canon suggests that he received a classical education during his youth.[16] That indicates that he had a local gentry background. Such an inference seems quite plausible when we consider that, as we will see later, many of Mazu's disciples and all of his main lay supporters came from the local elites. It seems quite evident that throughout his life Mazu was quite

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era. On the basis of this information alone it is obvious that the QTW edition of the stele inscription is mistaken.

[13] Concerning Mazu's birthplace, though various sources give different names to it, they all refer to the same place. The discrepancies among the different texts about the name of Mazu's birthplace are due to the fact that the authors referred to it by various names used during different periods. The stele inscription says that Mazu was born in Deyang 德陽 (present-day Deyang county), while SGSZ 10 (T 50.766a) states that he was born in Hanzhou 漢州. The name Hanzhou was used during the 686–742 period—and was thus the name that was in vogue at the time of Mazu's birth. The name Deyang was used from 742 until 758, when the area's name once more reverted back to Hanzhou. See Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 114. CDL 6.104 states that he was born in Sifang (county) in Hanzhou 漢州什邡, while ZTJ 14.304 has 十方 instead of 什邡, which is probably a misprint. For the exact geographical location of Hanzhou, see Tan Qixiang 譚其驤, ed., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* 中國歷史地圖集, vol. 5, pp. 65–66.

[14] It is difficult to ascertain when the appellation "Mazu" was first used. It is possible that this usage did not came in vogue during his lifetime. Neither the stele inscription nor the SGSZ biography refer to him as Mazu. Instead, they both use the appellation Ma *dashi* 馬大師 (Great Teacher Ma). Moreover, in SGSC 9, T50.762b, the name Mazu is used to refer to Xuansu 玄素 (668–752, a.k.a. Masu 馬素), a monk of the Niutou School. I have adopted the use of Mazu in deference to widespread current usage. For Xuansu, see his stele inscription, which was composed by Li Hua 李華, in QTW 320.3246b–48b, as well as his biographies in ZTJ 3.64, and CDL 4.66.

[15] QTW 501.5106a.

[16] See Ibid.

comfortable associating with people who had this type of socioeconomic upbringing, and that was probably in part because he shared the same class background. On the basis of this admittedly limited evidence, I tentatively conclude that most likely Mazu came from a family that was relatively well to do, and which belonged to the local upper class in Hanzhou.

However, the first fascicle of *Wujia zhengzong zan* 五家正宗贊, a text written by Shaotan 紹曇 (d.u.) during the Southern Song period, contains a story which suggests that Mazu came from a peasant family. According to this story, Mazu returned to his native place after obtaining Huairang's teachings at Nanyue mountain. Upon his arrival, he was warmly greeted by the local people, which supposedly led some old lady to complain about such a fuss being made for the son of the Ma, the "winnow family" (*boji jia* 簸箕家).[17] The old lady's statement can be interpreted to mean that the Ma family made winnows (or perhaps that they used them in agricultural work to separate the grain from its chaff), which implies that they were a peasant family with low social standing. This story was already known during the Northern Song, as can be seen from an allusion to it in Yuanwu Keqin's 圜悟克勤 (1063–1135) *Yuanwu xinyao* 圜悟心要.[18] Nonetheless, the story does not appear in any source written before the twelfth century, and it probably represents a popular tradition that tried to depict Mazu as a leader of a Buddhist tradition close to the common people (an unwarranted assumption that still finds an echo in the work of contemporary scholars). As we will see below, there is little in Mazu's life and teaching that indicates that he was particularly concerned about

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[17] XZJ 135.454b.

[18] XZJ 120.351b. See also Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 339, and p. 347, n. 7, where Yanagida indiscriminately accepts the story as true.

proselytizing among the ordinary people. Notwithstanding the later popular lore about him as a religious revolutionary who brought Chan close to ordinary people, it still seems prudent to conclude that the *Wujia zhengzong zan* story about Mazu's humble family background was a product of popular Song fiction.

Most sources, starting with the stele inscription, depict Mazu as a precocious child. The stele inscription states that from his birth he had an exceptional physical appearance, and that he was unlike an ordinary person. Even as a young child, we are told, he did not play any children's games. In a passage that was presumably intended to suggest that he was predestined for greatness from childhood, the stele inscription describes him in the following manner: "He stood as imposing as a mountain, and was as still as dammed water of a deep river. His tongue was so broad and long that it covered his nose. The soles of his feet were as nicely formed as if they had inscribed letters on them. He received his perfect character and spiritual abilities from heaven."[19] As a large tongue and marks on the feet are two of the thirty-two physical marks of a Buddha, the text evidently implies that Mazu's saintly character and prodigious spiritual qualities were inherited from his previous lives, during which—in accord with popular Buddhist beliefs—he had already cultivated the Buddhist path. Stories or other pieces of information about a particular monk's childhood experiences that demonstrate his early predisposition for the important religious role he was to assume latter in his life often appear in the hagiographies of noted monks. It is impossible to say if the above description is based at all on Mazu's physical appearance, or is just an example of the type of stylized pious flourishes common in Chinese Buddhist biography. At any rate, since Mazu did prove himself later in life to be quite an extraordinary person, it is quite

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[19] QTW 501.5106a.

probable that, as suggested by Quan Deyu, he was a gifted and unusual child (regardless of what the size of his tongue might have been).

Mazu entered monastic life in Zizhong 資中, located in his native Sichuan, during his teens. At that time he received the monastic name Daoyi, which was commonly used to refer to him by both his contemporaries as well as by later writers of Chan texts. Some of the motives and considerations that were behind his decision to enter monastic life are suggested in the following passage from his stele inscription:

> While still young he came to consider the [ancient] nine schools of thought and the six [Confucian] classics inadequate; being, after all, [merely] tools for governing the word, how could they be methods that aid transcendence of the world? The correct awakening of the [Buddhist] method of liberation alone is the locale of the mind of those who possess supreme wisdom.[20]

This passage suggests that during his youth Mazu, as part of an education program that was typical for sons of upper-class families, did undertake the study of the Confucian classics and the works of other ancient Chinese thinkers. He was apparently disillusioned with his studies, since the texts he studied offered little spiritual guidance of the kind he felt was necessary for transcendence of the mundane world, the avowed goal of Buddhist religious practice. It is probable that Mazu's choice of religious vocation was motivated primarily by spiritual considerations, but there could have been other factors as well. Unfortunately, we have no additional information about the actual circumstances of his departure from secular life, including any knowledge about any changes in his family's social standing or financial situation that could have influenced his choice of future vocation, or any clues about his parents' and relatives' influence on (or reaction to) his decision to enter a monastery.

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[20] QTW 501.5106b.

*Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu* state that Mazu's first teacher was Rev. Tang of Zizhou 資州唐和尚, a monk associated with the Chan movement in Sichuan, who is better known by his monastic name Chuji 處寂 (684–734).[21] Chuji's family name was Tang, and he was often called Rev. Tang.[22] He was a disciple of Zhishen of Zizhou 資州智詵 (609–702), one of the better-known disciples of the fifth Chan patriarch Hongren 弘忍 (601–674). Though Zhishen appears in the list of Hongren's ten great disciples recorded in Jingjue's 淨覺 (683–750) *Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記,[23] little is

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[21] There are three versions of Chuji's dates. His biography in *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 (T 51.184c) states that he died in 732 when he was sixty-eight years old. The Taishō edition of *Lidai fabao ji* is based on the Pelliot manuscript, but the Stein manuscript gives the year of his death as 736 (see Ibid.). Moreover, according to his biography in SGSZ 20, T 50.836b, Chuji died in 734 at the age of eighty-seven, which means his dates were 648–734. Ui Hakujū, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 174, accept the SGSZ version, while Yanagida vacillates between the various dates—following the SGSZ dating in *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 278, and the Pelliot manuscript version in *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki*, p. 278. Ishikawa Rikisan, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen," p. 105, follows the SGSZ version, while Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 115, correctly states that there is no conclusive evidence to support any text's version of Chuji's dates. I have decided to follow the SGSZ version, in part because the SGSZ is a more reliable source than *Lidai fabao ji* (despite the fact that it was composed much later). For Chuji, in addition to his brief biographies in SGSZ 20, T50.836b, and *Lidai fabao ji*, pp. 140–42 (Yanagida ed.); see also CDL 4.59 (T 51.224b, 226a). The SGSZ biography and a passage in the appendix to Weikuan's biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.768b, state that his lay surname was Zhou 周. SGSZ is most likely mistaken about his surname, since all other sources—including the stele inscription of his disciple Nanyue Chengyuan 南嶽承遠 (QTW 630.6354b, WYYH 866.4569a)—clearly state that his surname was Tang.

[22] Though the stele inscription does not give the name of Mazu's first teacher, it does state that he "shaved his head" in Zizhong 資中 (i.e. Zizhou), the area where Chuji resided at that time. On the other hand, ZTJ 14.304, states that he was ordained in Lohan monastery, and does not mention Chuji at all. This account might have some credence, as there was indeed a Lohan monastery in Mazu's native county that was built in 709, the year of Mazu's birth. See *Sichuan tongzhi* 四川通志 38.1558b, which states that Mazu was ordained at Lohan monastery. See also Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 114.

[23] T 85.1285c.

known about him.[24] Since there are no records of Zhishen's or Chuji's teachings, it is impossible to know what kind of instructions Mazu received from his first teacher. Nonetheless, it is important to note that from the very beginning of his monastic career Mazu was associated with monks who were connected to the early Chan movement.

Mazu was ordained as a monk in 728, when he reached the age of twenty (according to traditional Chinese reckoning, which considers a person to be one year old at birth). That was the age when according to the Vinaya he could receive ordination as a full-fledged monk (*bhikṣu*).[25] The sources disagree about the location where his ordination took place. According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, Mazu's ordination took place in Yuzhou 渝州 (present-day Ba 巴 county, Sichuan province), while his stele inscription states that he was ordained in Baxi 巴西 (present-day Mianyang county 綿陽縣, Sichuan province). During the Kaiyuan era (713–741) there was a county called Baxi in Mianzhou 綿州 and a county called Ba in Yuzhou, but these were two

[24] For Zhishen, see *Lidai fabao ji*, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki*, pp. 137–39. He does not have a biography in SGSZ, and in CDL he has only his name listed at the beginning of fascicle 4, CDL 4.59 (T 51.224a, 225c).

[25] Mazu's biography in SGSZ (T 50.766b) states that he was a monk for fifty years, which would mean that he was ordained in 738, at the age of thirty. Uncritically accepting the popular characterization of Mazu's teaching as iconoclastic and revolutionary, Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 118, speculates that the SGSZ version of the length of his monastic career must be correct because Mazu's epoch-making ideas about the nature of sin are not those of someone who was ordained at the age of twenty! It is difficult to see why Mazu would have waited for ten years to obtain ordination, since in 728 he was already living in a monastery as a novice, unless there were some external impediments that postponed his entry into the monastic order, such as a local government prohibition against ordinations. I have decided to follow the dating of Mazu's ordination that is based on the stele inscriptions and reject the SGSZ version because the first source is older and more reliable, and because the year 728 makes more sense and fits better in the overall historical narrative of Mazu's life. Nonetheless, it is also true that there is no definitive proof that the SGSZ version is wrong.

separate places.[26] The two accounts cannot be reconciled, unless we read the stele inscription's Baxi as "the western part of Ba [county]"—admittedly a forced reading. It is difficult to decide which text is mistaken, as there is no additional information from any other source that corroborates either account.

The name of Mazu's preceptor was Vinaya teacher (*lüshi*) Yuan 圓律師.[27] Nothing is known about this monk. Most likely he was, as his title indicates, a senior monk who specialized in the monastic precepts and procedures. It is probable that Yuan simply officiated at Mazu's ordination ceremony and offered him basic instructions about monastic discipline, without the two developing any strong personal bonds. As can be seen from the biographies of other monks from the Tang period, it was common for monks to enter monastic life with a senior monk with whom they had some affinities, and when it was time for them to become fully ordained they would go to a monastery that held official ordination ceremonies, where they would receive the monastic precepts from another senior monk who specialized in the Vinaya.

Zongmi's *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 圓覺經大疏鈔 states that Mazu also studied under Chuji's disciple Rev. Jin (or Kim in Korean) 金和尚, who is better known by his religious name Wuxiang (or Musang in Korean) 無相 (684–762).[28] Wuxiang, who was

[26] See the monograph on geography in XTS 42.1079, 1089, and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 117. See also Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 114, for a somewhat different interpretation.

[27] SGSZ 10, T 50.766a; CDL 6.104.

[28] XZJ 14.279a. For an English translation of the relevant passages, see Jan Yun-hua, "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* 58 (1972), pp. 45–47. For Wuxiang's biography, see SGSZ 19, T 50.832b–33a, and *Lidai fabao ji*, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, pp. 142–54. Additional information about him can also be found in Shenqing's 神清 (d. 806–820) *Beishan lu* 北山錄 6,T52.611b. Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 380, disputes Zongmi's claim that Wuxiang was Mazu's teacher, arguing that as Mazu was ordained in 727 (sic), he could not be Wuxiang's disciples since Wuxiang arrived in Sichuan in 730, after Mazu's ordination. Ui mistakenly interprets Zongmi statement that Mazu was Wuxiang's disciple to mean that Wuxiang ordained Mazu as a novice. As

born in the Korean kingdom of Silla 新羅 (668–935), was Chuji's best-known disciple and one of the leaders of the Chan movement in Sichuan. Wuxiang's family name was Kim, and he was a member of the Silla royal family. He arrived in the Chinese capital Changan in 728. According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, during his stay there he met with Emperor Xuanzong.[29] Subsequently, probably in 730 or soon afterwards, he moved to Zizhong in Sichuan. There he met Chuji, and studied with him for about two years.[30] Most likely Wuxiang stayed with Chuji from 732 until Chuji's death in 734, after which he went to reside at Tianyu mountain 天谷山. A few years later, at the invitation of the provincial military governor Zhangqiu Jianqiong 章仇兼瓊 (d.u.), Wuxiang went to reside in Jingzhong monastery 淨衆寺 in Chengdu 成都, the provincial capital and the largest and wealthiest city in the southwestern part of the Tang empire.[31] Zhangqiu, who rose to fame due to his successful role in the war against the Tibetans,[32] held a post in Sichuan the during 739–746 period. Accordingly, Wuxiang's move to Chengdu must have occurred sometime during this time.[33] Most likely Zhangqiu invited Wuxiang to Chengdu soon after he assumed his post in Sichuan, perhaps in 740 or 741, as *Lidai fabao ji* tells us that Wuxiang (who died in 762) was active teaching at Jingzhong monastery for over two decades.

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Zongmi simply says that Mazu studied with Wuxiang, there is no conflict between his statement and the SGSZ account, viz. Mazu could have been first ordained by Chuji and could have subsequently gone to study with Wuxiang.

[29] SGSZ 19, T 50.832b.

[30] *Lidai fabao ji*, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, p. 142.

[31] Ibid. For the history of Jingzhong monastery, see *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1534a–b. For the general history of Chengdu during the Sui-Tang period, see Jeannette L. Faurot, *Ancient Chengdu*, pp. 63–92.

[32] See JTS 196.5234–35, and XTS 216.6086, as well as Denis Twitchett, "Hsüan-tsung (reign 712–756)," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part I*, p. 428.

Jingzhong monastery was one of the important official monasteries in the provincial capital. The monastery was also the site where monastic ordination ceremonies were performed at regular intervals.[34] During his long stay at Jingzhong monastery, Wuxiang had a successful teaching career. He emerged not only as Chuji's best-known disciple, but he eventually became a leading figure in the Chan movement in Sichuan during the middle part of the eighth century. Wuxiang's teachings also reached Tibet, and he was probably the best known Chan teacher in Tibet in the eighth century, a period during which the Tibetans were interested in this school of Chinese Buddhism.[35]

According to *Lidai fabao ji*, a text composed by the Baotang 保唐 Chan lineage in Sichuan, Wuxiang taught the doctrine of the "three phrases" (*sanju* 三句), which was his trademark teaching. The three phrases were "no remembering" (*wuyi* 無憶), "no thought" (*wunien* 無念), and "no forgetting" (*mowang* 莫忘).[36] According to Wuxiang, the three phrases corresponded to the three main parts of traditional Buddhist practice: morality (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*).[37] Zongmi describes Wuxiang's teaching as follows:

> As to the three phrases, they are no-remembering, no-thought, and no-forgetting. [Their function is] to cause the mind to abandon the memory of past events and to stop worrying about the vicissitudes of the future, so that it will always conform to

[33] See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 115.

[34] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 3b, XZJ 14.278c, *Lidai fabao ji*, T 51.185a-b, and Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, p. 143. See also Peter Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 41.

[35] See Ōbata Hironobu 小田宏允, "*Rekidai hōbōki* to kodai Chibetto no Bukkyō" 歷代法寶記と古代チベットの佛教, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, pp. 325–29.

[36] According to Zongmi, Wuzhu, who claimed to be a disciple of Wuxiang, later changed the third phrase to "no falsehood" (*mowang* 莫妄). Wuzhu apparently thought that the disciples of Wuxiang had misunderstood their teacher. See XZJ 14.278d.

[37] See Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, p. 21, and Idem, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi* and the Ch'an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening,", p. 29–30.

> this understanding without any confusion or mistake. This is what is called no-forgetting. Again, not remembering external objects and not thinking of the mind within, one should cultivate this without any attachment. The order of morality, meditation, and wisdom corresponds to the order of the three phrases. Though they used many expedients in their teaching, in their essential meaning they were all included within the three phrases.[38]

Concerning the origin of Wuxiang's teaching about the three phrases, *Lidai fabao ji* quotes him as saying: "What I am saying about these three phrases is a teaching that was originally transmitted by Bodhidharma. It is not something that was taught by Rev. [Zhi]shen and Rev. Tang."[39] The text also adds that whenever Wuxiang formally lectured on the precepts, he would not quote Zhishen and Chuji, but would instead proclaim the three phrases transmitted by Bodhidharma, which were referred to as the "all-inclusive teaching" (*zongchi men* 總持門).[40]

*Lidai fabao ji*'s claim that Bodhidharma transmitted the teaching about the three phrases is not corroborated by any evidence; most likely it is nothing but a pious fiction created in order to lend greater legitimacy to this doctrine by associating it with the putative founder of Chinese Chan. It is possible that Wuxiang received some teachings similar to the three phrases prior to coming to Sichuan, perhaps during his stay in northern China, where he could have come in contact with teachers associated with the Northern School of Chan. Although this particular teaching is not found in any of the extant text associated with the Northern School, these texts do not represent the whole intellectual output of this tradition and it is quite conceivable that teachings like these could have been conceived in Northern School's religious milieu. It is more probable,

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[38] *Zhonghua chuan xindi chanmen shizi chengxi tu*, XZJ 14.278b-c; cf. Jan, "Tsung-mi: His Analysis of Ch'an Buddhism," p. 43. For a Japanese translation, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, trans., *Zengen shosenshū tojo* 禪源 諸詮集都序, pp. 305–07.

[39] Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, p. 144.

however, that Wuxiang's doctrine about the three phrases was his own creation. The doctrine was most likely a conceptual scheme that synthesized various ideas current in the Chan movements in both the North and Sichuan, which he or his disciples sought to associate with Bodhidharma in order to enhance its authority and lend it an air of religious sanctity.

According to Zongmi, Wuxiang's main disciples were Shenhui of Jingzhong monastery 淨衆寺神會 (720–794),[41] Suizhou Li 遂州李, Tongquanxian Xiu 通泉縣秀, and Zhangsong Ma 長松馬 (d.u.).[42] Among them, Shenhui, who became the abbot of Jingzhong monastery after Wuxiang's death, was unquestionably the best-known teacher. To Zongmi's list of Wuxiang's noted disciples we can also add Shenqing, the author of *Beishan lu*. Concerning the identity of Zhangsong Ma, at the beginning of fascicle four of *Chuandeng lu* he is listed as a disciple of Chuji.[43] That does not necessarily mean that Zongmi's statement that he was a disciple of Wuxiang is incorrect, since he might have studied with both monks. In his monumental study of early Chan literature, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, Yanagida Seizan identifies this monk as none other than Mazu.[44] If Yanagida's assertion about the identity of Zhangsong Ma is correct, that would mean that after Mazu finished his study with Wuxiang, he moved to Zhangsong mountain (located in the northwestern part of Qianzhou 簡州, not far from

[40] Ibid. *Zongchi men* is also the standard Chinese translation for *dhāranī*.

[41] Biography in SGSZ 9, T 50.764a.

[42] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 3b, XZJ 14.278c. See also the discussion about Wuxiang's disciples in Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 283.

[43] CDL 4.59 (T 51.224c, 226c).

[44] Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 283, 338. Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 115, also agrees with Yanagida on this point.

Chengdu).[45] There, according to Yanagida's interpretation, Mazu started his teaching career at what would have been an unusually early age. This supposition about the identity of Zhangsong Ma implies that Mazu was already an experienced teacher even before he left Sichuan. Moreover, Yanagida's assertion that these two monks were one and the same person, for which he does not provides convincing evidence, also seems to be supported by a passage in the section on temples in *Sichuan tongzhi* 四川通志, which states that Zhangsong monastery on Zhangsong mountain was build during the Kaiyuan era (713–741) by Chan teacher Mazu.[46]

I believe that Yanagida's identification of Zhangsong Ma as Mazu is incorrect, for the following reasons. First, the evidence from *Sichuan tongzhi* is highly suspect. The gazetteer was written centuries after Mazu's death, and it was quite understandable that its authors wanted to associate their local temple with the famous Mazu, rather than with an obscure monk whose name barely merited a footnote in Sichuan's local religious history. In gazetteers from Sichuan and Jiangxi there are many references to monasteries that supposedly had some connection with Mazu. The origin of this kind of information is often open to doubt, and such evidence cannot be taken at face value.[47] Moreover, considering the similarity of the names of both monks, the author(s) of the *Sichuan tongzhi* account could have easily assumed that the monastery was established by the only Master Ma from Sichuan they new, the famous leader of the Hongzhou School, rather than by another monk who was probably already long forgotten by the local community. Second, the fact that Zhangsong Ma and Mazu were both disciples of Wuxiang whose

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[45] See Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 115.

[46] *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1556b.

surname was Ma can be explained as a simple coincidence. Wuxiang had many disciples, and two or more of them could have easily had the same surname. Daoyuan, the compiler of *Chuandeng lu*, considered the two to be separate individuals, which can be inferred from the fact that he listed them as disciples of two separate teachers. Third, it is hardly probable that Mazu could have assumed the role of a leader of his own monastic community only few years after his ordination, while he was still in his twenties. Finally, there is absolutely no information in any of his early biographical sources that he was active as a teacher during his stay in Sichuan, nor is there any indication that he ever resided at Zhangsong mountain.[48]

## Travel East and Study with Huairang

We can do no more than guess about the circumstances and events that influenced Mazu's decision to leave his home province not long after his ordination, while he was still in his twenties. Although the personal considerations that influenced this decision are unclear, at that point in his monastic career Mazu's course of action was by no means unusual. During the Tang period it was not uncommon for young monks from Sichuan to leave their native region and travel to Buddhist monasteries and pilgrimage sites in other parts of the country. Such travels were motivated by a variety of reasons, not all of which were necessarily of religious nature. Some monks left their home province because of a desire to study with famous teachers or visit important pilgrimage sites. Other ambitious monks with more worldly predilections perhaps left because they hoped that being closer

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[47] For examples of references about monasteries in Sichuan which supposedly had various kinds of connections with Mazu, see *Sichuan tongzhi* 38.1547b, 1551b, 1556c, 1558b.

[48] The discussion presented here is in part based on Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," pp. 119–20, although I disagree with some of his arguments.

to the major political and cultural centers of the Tang empire would open for them wider avenues for advancement in the religious and social hierarchy. Sometimes perhaps the motives were complex mixtures of religious and mundane considerations, and there were probably some who left for no apparent reasons—perhaps because they felt a need for change of scenery or a desire for new experiences.

During the eighth century Buddhism flourished in Sichuan, and there were many monasteries where an earnest young monk could study the Buddhist scriptures or practice meditation. At the same time, Sichuan was still a remote province on the periphery of the vast empire, far away from China's main religious centers and holy sites. The chances for meeting famous teachers in Sichuan paled when compared with the opportunities available in other parts of China. Sichuan monks were perhaps in a position similar to that of contemporaneous monks from the Korean peninsula, many of whom left their native land to travel to China in their search for enhanced and more plentiful opportunities to meet qualified teachers from whom they could learn the Buddhist dharma.

Besides Mazu, Zongmi is another example of a well-known monk born in Sichuan during the eight century who left the province as young man and went to study and teach in other parts of China. In addition to these two, there were many other monks from Sichuan who were associated with various Chan lineages and who also left the province during their younger years. Examples of this kind include Shenhui's disciple Huanglong Weizhong 黃龍惟忠 (705–782), a native of Chengdu,[49] as well as Zhangle Farong 長樂法融(747–835) and Lingzhuo of Anguo Monastery 安國靈著 (691–746),[50] two

[49] Biography in SGSZ 9, T 50.763b.

[50] Biographies in SGSZ 29, T 50.894c, and SGSZ 9, T 50.761b-c, respectively.

disciples of the famous Northern School teacher Puji 普寂 (651–739). Among Mazu's disciples there were at least two monks from Sichuan, Lecturer Liang of Xishan 西山亮座主 (d.u.) and Rev. Zechuan 則川和尚 (d.u.).[51] Even among Chuji's disciples, Mazu was not the only one who left Sichuan and headed East. Nanyue Chengyuan 南嶽承遠 (712–802), who like Mazu was also born in Hanzhou and was only three years Mazu's junior, left Sichuan after Chuji's death in 734, and arrived at Yuquan monastery 玉泉寺 in Jingzhou 荊州 (present-day Dangyang county 當陽縣 in Hubei 湖北 province) in 735.[52]

The date of Mazu's departure from Sichuan is not clear, but most likely he left Sichuan around the same time as Chengyuan (i.e., around 735), as has been suggested by Japanese scholars.[53] As Mazu and Chengyuan were born in the same area, were of roughly the same age, and were fellow disciples of the same teacher, they most likely knew each other fairly well. It is possible that they might have consulted each other about their travel plans. Though there is no evidence to prove it, as they were both headed in the same direction—Jingzhou in Shannan East Province (in present-day Hubei province)—it is conceivable, perhaps even probable, that they left Sichuan together.

Zongmi provides the information that Mazu resided at Mingyue mountain 明月山 in Jingnan 荊南 (i.e., Jingzhou) for an extended period, at a secluded site where he practiced seated meditation.[54] It is quite plausible that Mazu resided there at least for

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[51] See CDL 8.138–39, 141.

[52] See Chengyuan's stele inscription, *Nanyue Mituosi Chengyuan heshang bei* 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑, composed by Lü Wen 呂溫 (772–811), in WYYH 866.4568b–70a, and QTW 630.6354b–55a. See also Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 120.

[53] Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 381; Ishikawa Rikisan, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen," p. 106; and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 120.

[54] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 3b, XZJ 14.279a. For the location of Mingyue mountain, see *Jingzhou fuzhi*

some time. Jingzhou, an important point on the main road from the capital to the South, was located on the land and river routes from Sichuan to south China, and Mazu would mostly likely have had to pass through the area on his eastward journey.[55] Moreover, there is indication that there was at least one more disciple of Wuxiang who resided at Mingyue mountain, a monk called Rong *chanshi* 融禪師.[56] It is possible that during his stay at Mingyue mountain Mazu first heard about Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744), the monk who later became his main teacher. Quan Deyu's stele inscription suggests that Mazu had already heard about Huairang before the two met at Nanyue: "Later he heard that Chan master [Huai]rang at Hengyue 衡嶽 received from the sixth patriarch at Caoxi 曹溪 the teaching that [directly] reaches the true mind, and is [thus] called the sudden approach. As soon as he heard [Huairang's] words, he was freed from mundane worries."[57]

The *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, contradicting Zongmi's account of Mazu's meeting with Huairang, says that Mazu first heard about Huairang while he was still in Sichuan.[58] That is highly unlikely.[59] At that time Huairang was an obscure monk living at a mountain located hundreds of miles from Mazu's monastery in Sichuan. Huairang was far from being a famous Chan teacher, and it is extremely unlikely that he was known in

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荊州府志 3.50a, and 28.313a.

[55] See Aoyama Sadao 青山定雄, *Tō-Sō jidai no kōtsū to chishi chizu no kenkyū* 唐宋時代の交通と地誌地圖の研究, pp. 8, 10, and p. 49, n. 36; and Ishikawa, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen," p. 106.

[56] See CDL 4.60. Only his name is listed among Wuxiang's disciples, and virtually nothing is known about him.

[57] QTW 501.5106a.

[58] SGSZ 10, T 50.766.

[59] See discussion in Ishikawa, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen," p. 106.

Sichuan. Even at later times, the only reason Huairang came to occupy an important place in Chan history was because he was Mazu's teacher. During the mid-730s, he was at best a leader of a small community at Nanyue, a mountain that was a provincial religious center in the Hunan area. Moreover, the fact that Huairang was a disciple of Huineng would not have been a very strong selling point as far as attracting prospective disciples was concerned. During the 730s Huineng was not yet well known, and his wider recognition as the sixth Chan patriarch was still a few decades away.

Even though it is thus quite unlikely that Mazu heard about Huairang before leaving Sichuan, it is quite possible that he heard about him after he arrived in Jingzhou. During the mid-730s, both Mazu and his fellow-monk Chengyuan stayed in Jingzhou, which was also where Huairang was ordained a few decades earlier. After they left Jingzhou, both Mazu and Chengyuan went to Nanyue, where Huairang was residing at the time. Chengyuan, who arrived at Yuquan monastery in Jingzhou around 735, studied with the monastery's abbot, a respected teacher called Rev. Zhen 眞和尙 (i.e., Huizhen 惠眞, 673–751).[60] When Chengyuan left for Nanyue in 738, he apparently did so on the advice of Rev. Zhen. Not only was Yuquan monastery the very monastery where Huairang received his ordination, but he was also ordained by the same preceptor who also ordained Rev. Zhen, a Vinaya teacher called Hongjing 弘景 (634–712).[61] If at that time Mazu was still in close contact with Chengyuan—which is quite likely, considering the

[60] For Huizhen's biography, see his stele inscription, *Jingzhou Nanquan Dayunsi gu Ranruo heshang bei* 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尙碑, composed by Li Hua 李華, in WYYH 860.4541a–42b, and QTW 319.3236b–38a. For a study of his teachings, see Tsukamoto, *Tō chūki no jōdokyō*, pp. 314–23.

[61] See Huairang's biographies in ZTJ 3.86–88, SGSZ 9, T 50.761a-b, and CDL 5.92; and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 121. For Hongjing, see his biography in SGSZ 5, T 50.732b-c, and Tsukamoto, *Tō chūki no jōdokyō*, p. 57, n. 9.

fact that they were living close to each other—he could have heard about Huairang from Chengyuan, or perhaps from Chengyuan's teacher.

Huairang, the monk whom the later Chan tradition came to regard as the teacher from whom Mazu received the transmission of the Buddha's enlightenment, was born in 677 in the Du 杜 family in Jinzhou 金州.[62] He entered monastic life in 692, when he was fifteen years old.[63] He then received monastic ordination on the twelfth day of the fourth lunar month in 696 (first year of the Tongtian 通天 era) at Yuquan monastery in Jingzhou (as noted above).[64] This monastery had been an important monastic establishment even before the Tang dynasty. It first became well-known when Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597), the great founder of the Tiantai 天台 tradition resided there during the Sui 隋 dynasty (581–617). During the Tang period the monastery continued to function as an important center of Tiantai studies.[65] Throughout the seventh century the monastery continued to be a center of meditation practice, and from around 676 until 701 it was the residence of

[62] The oldest source of biographical information about Huairang is his stele inscription, *Hengzhou boresi guanyin dashi beiming bingxu* 衡州般若寺觀音大師碑銘并序, written by Zhang Zhengfu 張正甫 in 815 (QTW 619.6246a–47a). The stele inscription was commissioned by Mazu's disciples in the capital (see Chapter Six). For other biographical sources about him, see the previous note. There are also extant fragments of his biography in BLZ (which was part of the lost tenth fascicle), which was written fourteen years before his stele inscription. See Shiina's two articles, "*Hōrinden* makikyū makiju no itsubun," pp. 193, 196, and "*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū," p. 248.

[63] The extant fragment from his biography in BLZ 10 states that he entered monastic life at the age of fifteen, but gives the year of his leaving of lay life as 687, when he was in fact only ten years old. I am assuming that the information about his age is correct, and the year of his ordination is wrong, but it might as well be the other way around. See Shiina, "*Hōrinden* makikyū makiju no itsubun," p. 193, and Idem, "*Hōrinden* itsubun no kenkyū," p. 248.

[64] BLZ 10, quoted in Shiina, "*Hōrinden* makikyū makiju no itsubun," p. 193.

[65] See Linda L. Penkower, "T'ian-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty: Chan-jan and the Sinification of Buddhism," pp. 191–93.

Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706), the leader of the Northern School of Chan.[66] The monastery was also a center of Vinaya studies, and Huairang's preceptor Hongjing was one of the prominent Vinaya masters of the time who resided there.[67] As Shenxiu was residing at Yuquan monastery at the time Huairang was ordained there, it is most likely that Huairang met with Shenxiu. There is even a possibility that he studied with Shenxiu.

According to an extant fragment from *Baolin zhuan*'s lost tenth fascicle, after his ordination Huairang went to Song mountain 嵩山, which at the time was a well-established Chan center, together with his fellow-monk Tanran 坦然. There he studied with Laoan 老安 (584?–709, a.k.a. Huian 惠安), one of the better known Chan teachers of the time.[68] According to some sources, Laoan was a student of Hongren—his name appears among the ten great disciples listed in *Lengqie shizi ji*—and with Shenxiu and Faru he was one of the leaders of the Chan School in the North.[69] Before going to Songshan, Laoan had also resided at Yuquan monastery, and Huairang must have heard about him during his stay there.[70] In 701 Laoan was invited to the capital by Empress Wu, and he died in Luoyang eight years later as a widely-respected monk.[71]

According to his biography in *Zutang ji*, after visiting Songshan, Huairang

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[66] See McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 50–51.

[67] Yanagida, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu, jo no ni" 新續燈史の系譜，敍の二, ZK 60 (1981), pp. 5–6. For a more detailed discussion, see Tsukamoto, *Tō chūki no jōdokyō*, pp. 127, 324–29.

[68] BLZ 10, quoted in Shiina, "*Hōrinden* makikyū makiju no itsubun," p. 196. The same information can also be found in ZJL 97, T 48.940c, and ZTJ 3.87.

[69] Laoan's relationship with Hongren is problematic. Since Laoan was twenty years Hongren's senior and close in age to Daoxin (580–651), Hongren's teacher and the putative fourth Chan patriarch, it is very unlikely that he would have become a disciple to a monk who was so much younger than him.

[70] For Laoan's biography, see his stele inscription in QTW 396.4040a, and his two biographies in SGSZ 18, T 50.823b-c, and SGSZ 19, T 50.829c–30a. See also McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 56–58.

traveled south, and around 699 he arrived at Caoxi 曹溪, in the northern part of Lingnan 嶺南 province (present-day Guangdong 廣東). There he met Huineng and studied with him for twelve years.[72] After his departure from Caoxi in 711 he traveled north, and for an extended period he probably stayed in Wudang, Hubei province.[73] Around 720 he reached Nanyue, and settled in the mountain close to Bore (*prajñā*) monastery 般若寺. That was the same monastery where Zhiyi's teacher Huisi 慧思 (515–577) had resided during the Sui period. There he led a quiet contemplative life until his death in 744. Huairang did not have many disciples. In addition to Mazu, *Song gaoseng zhuan* lists the name of one more disciple, Daojun 道峻 (d.u.), while *Chuandeng lu* states that he had six main disciples.[74]

During his lifetime Huairang was not a well-known monk, and he was probably not considered to be among Huineng's main disciples. His name is not mentioned in the earliest extant version of *Liuzu dashi fabao tanjing* 六祖大師法寶壇經, which gives the names of Huineng's leading disciples.[75] If we exclude the brief mention of his meeting with Mazu that is recorded in Mazu's stele inscription, the earliest information about Huairang's life dates from the early ninth century (over half a century after his death). His subsequent rise to prominence in Chan circles was due to the fact that he was

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[71] See Yanagida, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu, jo no ni," p. 7.

[72] ZTJ 3.87.

[73] *Hengzhou boresi guanyin dashi beiming bingxu*, QTW 619.6246b, and Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 385.

[74] SGSZ 9, T 50.761a; CDL 5.92. The noticeable increase in the number of Huairang's disciples presented in later texts is an indication of the efforts of later Chan writers to enhance his image as one of Huineng's two main disciples by, among other things, claiming that he was a teacher who attracted more disciples than he actually did.

[75] See the list of Huineng's great disciples in T 48.343b, and Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, p. 170.

considered to be the teacher of Mazu.[76] This has led some scholars to suspect that Mazu's disciples in the capital manipulated the connection between Huineng and Huairang in order to provide Mazu with the proper spiritual pedigree. According to this interpretation, by the early ninth century Huineng was widely recognized as the sixth patriarch of Chan, and it is possible to imagine that it would have been advantageous for Mazu's disciples to forge a direct link between Mazu and Huineng via Huairang.[77] Some scholars have also questioned the claim that Huairang studied with Huineng, indirectly suggesting that the link between the two was perhaps forged as part of the collusion to establish Mazu as the rightful heir of the orthodox lineage of Chan.[78]

There is little doubt that Huairang's image and his place in Chan history were closely related to the fortunes of his famous disciple and the Chan lineages that considered Mazu as their progenitor. Later versions of *Liuzu tanjing*, as well as other texts compiled during the post-Tang period, contain apocryphal dialogues between Huairang and Huineng that were created in order to elevate Huairang's status as one of Huineng's main disciples. At the same time, I am not aware of any compelling reasons to deny that Huairang studied with Huineng, and that he was considered by his contemporaries to be a disciple of Huineng. The fact that Mazu's disciples commissioned Huairang's stele inscription does not necessarily mean that it contains wrong or misleading information. The link between Huairang and Huineng was already mentioned in Mazu's stele inscription (which confirms that Huairang was Huineng's disciple), so we

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[76] Even Huairang's later biographies are completely dominated by Mazu. For example, see his biography in CDL 5.92–93, which hardly discuses any other aspect of Huairang's life beyond his relationship with Mazu.

[77] See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," pp. 122–24.

[78] McRae, *The Northern School*, p. 94.

can be pretty sure that during Mazu's lifetime Huairang was considered a disciple of Huineng and a teacher of Mazu.

We do not know who Huairang considered to be his principal teacher—if he taught along those lines at all—and it is possible that he might not have been concerned about his lineage at all. From all we know, he was a student of both Laoan and Huineng, and he might also have studied with Shenxiu. During his life the sectarian divide between competing Chan lineages was not an important issue. That was still a period before Shenhui's bigoted campaigns against the Northern School became a major issue for the Chan School. Identifying with the spiritual lineage of a particular Chan teacher was probably not an important concern for the reclusive Huairang. At the same time, if Huineng was indeed his last teacher (as all biographical sources allege), it could as well be that Huairang considered his connection with Huineng stronger that the connection with his earlier teachers. To sum up the proceeding arguments, there are no compelling reasons to question the fact that Huairang was a disciple of Huineng (albeit an obscure one), or that he was a teacher of Mazu. At the same time, it is undoubtedly true that Huairang was not an important person in the Chan movement during his time, and it is possible that he would have been all but completely forgotten were it not for the fact that Mazu studied with him.

Zongmi writes that after leaving Mingyue mountain Mazu went on a pilgrimage of holy sites. During his pilgrimage to Nanyue, Mazu met with Huairang, and became his disciple.[79] The date of Mazu's departure from Mingyue mountain is not clear. Since he reached Nanyue before 740 (see below), he must have left Mingyue sometime during the 736–740 period; 738, the same year Chengyuan went to Nanyue, seems a reasonable

[79] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 3b, XZJ 14.279a.

guess. As at the time Nanyue was an important religious center, with an ancient history and strong ties with many important Buddhist monks of the past, there is a strong possibility that Zongmi's statement that during his travels Mazu went to Nanyue on a pilgrimage and there met with Huairang is correct. It is also possible that (as was pointed out above) Mazu heard about Huairang beforehand, and the meeting between the two was not simply a chance encounter, but that the prospect of meeting Huairang was one of the reasons for Mazu's journey to Nanyue.

The best-known account of Mazu's meeting with Huairang first appears in Huairang's biography in *Zutang ji*, and a similar version of the same story can also be found in Huairang's biography in *Chuandeng lu*.[80] According to the *Chuandeng lu* version, while Mazu was practicing meditation at Chuanfa temple 傳法院 on Nanyue mountain, he was noticed by Huairang, who at the time was residing at the mountain. Huairang apparently immediately recognized Mazu's spiritual potential. In order to teach Mazu about the futility of his misguided attempts to achieve awakening by the practice of seated meditation, Huairang grabbed a tile and started to polish it. When the perplexed Mazu asked him what he was doing, Huairang explained that he was trying to make a mirror. Mazu remonstrated that it was impossible to do so. Huairang then explained that Mazu's type of meditation practice was as likely to make him a Buddha as was his polishing of brick would turn it into a mirror. After Mazu realized his folly, Huairang offered him instructions about Chan. Huairang's instructions (which, by the way, do not appear to be particularly profound) apparently led to Mazu's realization of spiritual awakening (as it usually happens in Chan stories). The story ends with Huairang's recognition of the authenticity of Mazu's awakening, which is followed with a

[80] ZTJ 3.87.

transmission verse that symbolizes the transmission of the Buddha's enlightenment from Huairang to Mazu.[81]

This dramatic depiction of Mazu's first meeting with Huairang brings about some interesting questions about the nature of Chan practice and realization, and about the role of meditation in Chan praxis. As far as its value as a source for a historical reconstruction of Mazu's biography is concerned, none of the Tang sources, including Mazu's and

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[81] CDL 5.92; ZTJ 3.87. The famous account of the meeting between Mazu and Huairang, as it appears in MY, is as follows:

> During the Kaiyuan period of Tang dynasty, Mazu was practicing *samādhi* at Chuanfa monastery in Hengyue. There he met with Rev. Huairang, who immediately recognized him as a being worthy of receiving the teaching. Huairang asked him, 'Why are you sitting in meditation?" The Master replied, "Because I want to become a Buddha." Thereupon Huairang took a brick and started to polish it in front of Mazu's hermitage. Mazu asked him, "Why are you polishing that brick?" Huairang replied, "Because I want to make a mirror." Mazu asked, "How can you make a mirror by polishing a brick?" Huairang said, "If I cannot make a mirror by polishing a brick, how can you become a Buddha by sitting in meditation?" Mazu asked, "Then what shall I do?" Huairang asked, "When an ox-carriage stops moving, do you hit the carriage or the ox?" Mazu had no reply. Huairang continued, "Are you practicing to sit in meditation, or practicing to sit like a Buddha? As to sitting in meditation, meditation is neither sitting nor lying. As to sitting like a Buddha, the Buddha has no fixed form. In the non-abiding Dharma, one should neither grasp nor reject. If you try to sit like a Buddha, you are just killing the Buddha. If you attach to the form of sitting, you will never realize the principle." Upon hearing this Mazu felt as if he had tasted ghee. He bowed and asked, "How should one's mind be so that it will accord with the formless *samādhi*?" Huairang said, "Your study of the teaching of the mind-ground is like planting a seed. My teaching of the essentials of the Dharma is like heaven bestowing rain. Because you have natural affinity, you will perceive the Way." Mazu also asked, "The Way is without form; how can it be perceived?" Huairang said, "The Dharma-eye of the mind-ground can perceive the Way. It is same with the formless *samādhi*." Mazu asked, "Is that still subject to becoming and decay?" Huairang said, "If you see the Way trough such concepts as becoming and decay, meeting and parting, then you do not truly see the Way. Listen to my verse: 'The mind ground contains various seeds / Which with rain will come to sprout./ The flower of *samādhi* is formless,/ How can it decay or become.'"

XZJ 119.405c-d; translation adapted from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 59–60.

Huairang's inscriptions, make any mention of the story.[82] Moreover, the story's literary structure, dramatic setting, and language are typical of the types of encounter dialogue stories that started to proliferate during the Five Dynasties period, and became the major feature of Song Chan texts.

Unfortunately, as we move away from sources of this type, there is very little information about Mazu's relationship with Huairang. Since there are no reliable materials about Huairang's teachings, we do not know what he taught Mazu. We are thus unable to establish the scope of Huairang's impact on Mazu's conception of Chan practice, or his influence on the contents of Mazu's later teachings. We cannot even be sure about the length of the time Mazu spent at Nanyue. *Chuandeng lu* states that Mazu spend ten years with Huairang, but that is an obvious exaggeration.[83] Mazu left Huairang well before 744, the year of Huairang's death, and he could not have arrived there before 736.[84] A stay of about four years, roughly during the 736–740 period, is a viable conjecture. It is also possible that his stay at Nanyue was considerably shorter. It we accept Zongmi's remark that Mazu stayed at Mingyue mountain for "a long time," that could mean that he left Mingyue mountain during the late 730s, which would make his stay with Huairang no longer that a couple of years.[85]

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[82] See QTW 619.2767b-c. An earlier version of the CDL story can be found in ZJL 97, T 48.940a-b. Though this version contains Huairang's instructions and his transmission verse, it lack the incident with the polishing of a brick.

[83] CDL 5.92.

[84] There is a story (albeit of late dating) in which Huairang comments about Mazu's successful teaching, implying that Mazu had left his teacher and started his own teaching career while Huairang was still alive. See CDL 5.93.

[85] Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 387, states that Mazu stayed with Huairang for nine years, while Ishikawa, "Basozen keisei no ichisokumen," p. 107, argues that Mazu studied with Huairang only for a very short period. Ishikawa's inference is based on his problematic reading of a passage in Mazu's

## Early Teaching

Mazu's stele inscription and the other biographical sources tell us little about his activities during the few years following his departure from Nanyue. However, by putting together various pieces of information from diverse sources, especially the biographies of Mazu's disciples, many of which give the dates and locations of their first meetings with Mazu, it is possible to obtain a general outline of his main activities and itinerary during the 740s.[86] Around 741 (or perhaps even a little earlier), Mazu left Nanyue and headed for Fujian. There he settled at Fojiyan 佛跡巖 in Jianyang 建陽, which at that time was a part of Jiangnan East Province (located in the northern part of present-day Fujian province, not far from the border with Jiangxi).[87] We are left with no clues about the reasons behind his decision to move into what at the time was a rather remote provincial environment. He might have been invited to take residence in the area by local patrons, or he might have been attracted to the local surroundings at Fojiyan because he perceived

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stele inscription which compares his meeting with Huairang to the meeting between Yan Hui 顏回 and Confucius (see QTW 501.5106a). Though, as noted by Ishikawa, the passage in question does imply that Mazu immediately understood Huairang's teaching and reached awakening, that is meant only to explain the mode of his understanding. There is nothing in the text that directly suggests that, since Mazu was supposedly enlightened during his initial encounter with Huairang, he had nothing more to do at Nanyue and thus soon left the mountain, as inferred by Ishikawa. The passage quoted by Ishikawa should be read in conjunction with the proceeding passage, which declares that Mazu's spiritual abilities where already developed before he met Huairang, and thus it was only natural that he could immediately grasp the truths revealed to him by Huairang. The whole passage bears no direct relevance on the interpretation of the length of Mazu's stay with Huairang, as it is quite conceivable that Mazu could have gained a sudden understanding of Huairang's teaching soon after meeting him for the first time, and he could have subsequently decided to stay with his new teacher for a longer period of time.

[86] Helpful discussion of Mazu's itinerary during the 740s can be found in Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, pp. 371–75.

[87] The stele inscription does not mention his stay at this location, but his biography in CDL 6.104 does state that he went to Fojiyan after he left Nanyue.

them as being suitable for contemplative practice. These are reasons that are frequently cited as factors that influenced Chan monks' decisions about their residence in a particular place, but there could have been some other circumstances about which we do not know that could have led him to move to the area.

During his stay in Fojiyan, while he was still in his early thirties, Mazu attracted his first disciples. Fojiyan thus became the first of the four sites were Mazu taught. The earliest information about the beginning of Mazu's teaching career comes from the biographies of two of his earliest disciples, Daotong (731–813) of Tangzhou 唐州道通 and Zhixian (d.u.) of Ganquan monastery 甘泉寺志賢.[88] Daotong's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* states that during the first year of the Tianbao 天寶 era (742) he went to see Mazu, who at that time was teaching a group of disciples at Fojiyan in Jianyang.[89] Similarly, the biography of Zhixian, who was a native of Jianyang, states that during the same year he studied with Chan master Daoyi, who at the time was residing in the area.[90] Mazu's earliest disciples who studied with him at Fojiyan, in addition to Daotong and Zhixian, probably also included Mingjue (d. 831?) of Tianmu mountain 天目山明覺 and Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (d.u.), the author of the important *Dunwu yaomen* 頓悟要門, who later became one of his best-known disciples.[91]

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[88] See Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 371, and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 127.

[89] SGSZ 10, T 50.767c.

[90] SGSZ 9, T 50.763b. In Mazu's stele inscription Zhixian is listed as one of his main great disciples. See QTW 501.5106b.

[91] Mingjue's study with Mazu at Fojiyan is mentioned in his biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.774b, which says that when he heard that Mazu was cultivating the Chan teachings at Fojiyan, he went there and became a monk. Though there is little reliable information about Dazhu, whose dates are unknown, we do know that he was born in Jianzhou 建州, Fujian, which was located not far from Fojiyan. Moreover, we also know that he was one of Mazu's earliest disciples, and it seems most likely that he met Mazu at Fojiyan, when he was still quite young and when Mazu had just began his teaching

According to his stele inscription, sometime during the Tianbao period (742–756) Mazu left Fujian and moved to Jiangxi. In Jiangxi he first resided at Xili mountain 西裏山 in Fuzhou 撫州 (located in the western part of Linchuan 臨川 county), and later moved further south to Gonggong mountain 龔公山 in Qian 虔. The date of the move from Fujian to Jiangxi and the length of Mazu's stay in Linchuan are subject to different interpretations. Most likely, Mazu arrived in Linchuan around 743 and stayed there at least until 750.[92] We do not have much information about his activities during this period, but most likely Mazu—who was still only in his thirties when he arrived there—was becoming increasingly concerned with the training of his small group of disciples. In all likelihood Linchuan was the location where he initially formulated some of the teachings for which later he became well-known.

When Mazu left Fojiyan and moved to Linchuan, his disciple Daotong followed him. Soon after his arrival, Mazu was also joined by Chaoan 超岸 (d.u.).[93] In 750 he was joined by Xitang Zhizang 西堂智藏 (738–817), who at that time was only twelve years old.[94] It is also probable that during this period Mazu also converted Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (d.u.), who previously worked as a hunter.[95]

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career. Xitang's biography in CDL 7.119 also states that he joined Mazu at Fojiyan. That is probably a mistake, since he was from Qianhua 虔化 in Jiangxi, and at the time of Mazu's stay in Fojiyan he was too young to travel all the way to Fujian to study with Mazu. See Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, pp. 372–73. Moreover, Xitang's stele inscription states that he joined Mazu at Xili mountain in 750, when he was twelve years old. For the text of Xitang's stele inscription, see Ishii Shūdō, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," IBK 40/1 (1991), pp. 280–84.

[92] Following Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," pp. 127–28; but see also Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 373, which discuses various problems about the dating of Mazu's move from Fujian to Jiangxi.

[93] See SGSZ 11, T 50.774b.

[94] Following Xitang's stele inscription, reprinted in Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 282.

[95] CDL 6.111.

By the time Mazu's stay in Linchuan came to an end, he was already a middle-aged man. Though he was still a little known teacher leading a small group of monks in a remote provincial monastery, his great ability to inspire respect and loyalty in his disciples was probably already becoming apparent. By the time he left Linchuan, Mazu had in all likelihood already developed his teaching skills considerably, and was already used to the demands of the position of teacher and leader of a monastic community. He was ready to emerge from obscurity, and the opportunity to do so came when he moved to Gonggong mountain 龔公山.

## Stay at Gonggong Mountain

Gonggong mountain was located in Nankang commandery 南康郡, in the southern part of Jiangxi province. It is not clear when exactly the move to Nankang occurred, though it must have been sometime after 750, the year Xitang joined Mazu at Linchuan, and before 557, when according to some sources Mazu was already teaching at Gonggong mountain.[96] It is possible that his move coincided with the outbreak of the An Lushan rebellion in 755, though it is impossible to establish any direct connection between the two events. On his move from Linchuan to Nankang, Mazu was accompanied by some of his disciples, most notably Xitang, who was born in the Nankang area.

In its description of Mazu's activities during this period, the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography says, "He was unimpeded wherever he went, and he taught those who came to him."[97] The same text also says that after his arrival at the mountain Mazu had to tame

[96] The conclusion that Mazu moved to Gonggong mountain by 757 at the latest is based on the information presented in the biography of Zhaodi Huilang 招提慧朗 (738–820) in ZTJ 4.102, which states that Huiliao went to Gonggong mountain to study with Mazu during that year. See also Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 128.

[97] SGSZ 10, T 50.766a.

the demons that resided there and theorized the local populace. The people living in the area were apparently so afraid that they did not venture to enter the mountain at all. Once the demons submitted to Mazu, they left the mountain so that Mazu could establish a monastery there. "From then on, violent birds of pray and poisonous insects changed their minds, and the disturbances caused by them were put under control," concludes the *Song gaoseng zhuan* account.[98] This passage is interesting because it is one of the rare instances where thaumaturgic elements creep into Mazu's official biographies. The story points to the existence of popular lore devoted to Mazu's spiritual and thaumaturgic exploits that existed at one time, parts of which were preserved in his biographies in *Zutang ji* and *Song gaoseng zhuan.*

Gonggong mountain became the location where Mazu probably spent, together with Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou (see below), the longest period in his life. His stay there lasted well over a decade, and perhaps even as long as two decades. During this lengthy period, Mazu gradually emerged from a charismatic but obscure leader of a small group of monks into one of the leading Buddhist monks in Jiangxi province. The early part of Mazu's stay at Gonggong mountain coincided with the end of Xuanzong's long reign and the chaotic years of the An Lushan rebellion. Linchuan was of course far away from the fighting in the North. The rebellion's impact was probably not felt directly in the area, and in all likelihood the events in the North did not cause significant interruptions in the religious activities held at Mazu's monastery, or in the life of the surrounding community. Even so, they must have felt at least some psychological pressure arising from the insecurity and uncertainty that characterized those years. The last part of Mazu's stay at Gonggong mountain coincided with the early efforts to rebuild Tang state

[98] SGSZ 10, T 50.766a-b.

institutions that took place after the end of the rebellion in 763, and which led to a new set of social and political conditions that had impact on the future development of the Hongzhou School.

The stele inscription describes Mazu's activity during his stay at Gonggong mountain in the following manner: "[Due to Mazu's teaching] the violent (*juefu* 獷搏) were tamed and the cruel made benevolent. They all looked up to his [exemplary] conduct, and their actions were greatly transformed."[99] This animated passage describes the strong impact Mazu's charismatic personality and his inspired religious teachings had on his disciples, whose numbers steadily increased during his years at Gonggong mountain. It was during this period that Mazu attracted his best-known disciple, Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814), as well as numerous other monks, including Yanguan Jian 鹽官齊安 (752–841), Ezhou Wudeng 鄂州無等 (749–830) and Funiu Zizai 伏牛自在 (741–841). With the increasing numbers of disciples coming to study with him, Mazu was probably compelled to attach increasingly greater importance to his teaching activities.

In addition to attracting considerable number of monks as his disciples, during his stay at Gonggong mountain Mazu also began to associate with powerful government officials, some of who became his lay disciples. The ability to gain the support of well-placed lay supporters was important both for the development of Mazu's monastic career and for the growth and flourishing of his monastic community (both of which were of course closely interlinked). The establishment of a framework of personal relationships between Mazu and his disciples on the one hand, and local literati and government officials on the other, led to the formation of stable institutional support-mechanisms that

[99] QTW 501.5106a.

during the subsequent decades enabled his Hongzhou School to flourish and spread over a large geographical area.

The stele inscription and the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography both state that during Mazu's stay at Gonggong mountain the local governor Pei Xu 裴諝 (719–793) became his disciple.[100] The stele inscription describes Pei as follows: "Provincial Governor Pei, now a vice-prefect (*yin* 尹) of Henan, was a follower [of Buddhism] for a long time; he had a lot of faith in and respect for [the Buddhist teachings]. Using [the Buddhist practices] of concentration and wisdom (*ding* 定 and *hui* 慧), he developed [the Confucian] virtues of clarity and sincerity (*ming* 明 and *cheng* 誠)."[101] Pei Xu was born in Wenxi 聞喜, Hedong 河東 province (in present-day Shanxi 山西), as a member of the powerful Pei clan. The Pei clan was closely associated with the Tang ruling house, and during the Tang period it produced a considerable number of government officials. His father, Pei Kuan 裴寬 (681–755), was a distinguished official who held a number of important posts.[102] The senior Pei was a military governor of Youzhou 幽州 (in Hebei 河北) during the 742–744 period, and then became president of the Board of Finance. After he suffered a brief period of demotion to a provincial post, in 747 Pei Kuan retired (or rather he was forced to do so), presumably in order to devote himself to religious life.

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[100] Biography in JTS 126.3567–68, and XTS 130.4490–91. Both Mazu's stele inscription and his SGSZ biography do not give his full name, but in addition to his surname they also provide information about his title, official positions and approximate dates of official postings. This information has enabled both Suzuki and Nishiguchi to identify him as Pei Xu. See Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 119, and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," pp. 130–33. Nishiguchi (pp. 130–31) also has a Japanese translation of his JTS biography.

[101] QTW 501.5106a.

[102] Biographies in JTS 100.3129, and XTS 130.4488–90.

As a child Pei Xu received a classical education and passed the *mingjing* 明經 classical studies examination while he was still young. His first official appointment was as a military staff officer in Henan 河南. Later he obtained the post of executive officer for state lands (*yingtian panguan* 營田判官) in the two prefectures of Xiangzhou 襄州 and Dengzhou 鄧州 (both of which were at the time located in the province of Shannan East 山南東道). His career was interrupted when he moved to Luoyang to mourn the death of his mother. He was still in Luoyang when the An Lushan rebellion broke out, and he had to go into hiding when the rebellious armies entered the city. After the end of the rebellion, Pei Xu held a number of different official posts, including an appointment as a commissioner for salt and iron in Hedong 河東. In 766 he was appointed as a prefect of Qianzhou 虔州, the prefecture where Gonggong mountain was located, and during his posting there he met Mazu.[103] After serving as prefect at three other locations in Jiangxi and Huainan, Pei returned to the capital and assumed a military post. In his late years, during the reign of Dezong, he held a series of increasingly important posts, including that of a governor of Henan and a deputy viceroy of the Eastern Capital Luoyang.

Pei Xu was originally from a family that had strong ties with Buddhism. According to the official biography of his father Pei Kuan, the elder Pei had a strong interest in Buddhism throughout his life. He frequented Buddhist monasteries, where he associated with the monks, and he also often read Buddhist scriptures. Pei Kuan's interest in Buddhism became even stronger as he grew older.[104] He also studied Chan with Puji (651–739), Shenxiu's greatest disciple and the main representative of the Northern

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[103] See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 132.

[104] XTS 130.4490.

School in the two capitals during the 725–739 period.[105] Moreover, on Pei Xu's mother's side, his grandfather Wei Xian 韋銑 was associated with Xuansu 玄素 (668–752) of the Niutou 牛頭 School of Chan.[106] When Pei Xu met Mazu in 766, he was already a devout follower of Buddhism. By that time Mazu had already resided in Nankang for at least a decade, and was probably known as one the leading monks in the area. It is not difficult to imagine that after assuming the post there, Pei Xu heard about Mazu and arranged to have a meeting with him. Pei Xu apparently formed a very favorable impression of Mazu, and during his stay in the area he occasionally returned to Mazu's monastery to ask for spiritual instructions.

It was Mazu's growing reputation and his ability to attract the attention and respect of powerful local officials like Pei Xu that was probably at least partially responsible for his departure from Gonggong mountain, and his move into his new position as a leader of an official monastery in the capital of Hongzhou prefecture.

### Teaching at Kaiyuan Monastery

Sometime during the Dali period (766–780), Mazu left Gonggong mountain and moved to Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺, which was located in the prefectural capital of Hongzhou 洪州 (present-day Nanchang 南昌, the capital of Jiangxi province).[107] The date of Mazu's departure from Gonggong mountain is not clear, but most likely he left sometime during the 767–771 period. According to his stele inscription, Mazu was invited to take up residence at the official residence (*lisuo* 理所) in Hongzhou by Lu Sigong 路嗣恭

[105] See his biography in SGSZ 9, T 50.760c–61a. For Puji's life see also his stele inscription in QTW 262.2657b–61a, and McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 65–67.

[106] See Xuansu's stele inscription, written by Li Hua, in QTW 320.3246b–48b, and his biography in SGSZ 9, T 50.761c–62b. See also Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 134.

(711–781), soon after Lu assumed the post of civil governor of Jiangxi.[108] It is not clear if Mazu was already in Hongzhou at the time, or if it was Lu's invitation that was the cause for his departure from Gonggong mountain.[109] As Lu became a governor in the first month of the seventh year of the Dali era (approximately February 772)—or perhaps during the seventh month of the previous year (approximately August 771), according to a different source—he probably extended his invitation to Mazu sometime in 771 or 772.[110] It is possible that at the time when Mazu received Lu's invitation he had already been residing at Kaiyuan monastery for some time, but it could also be the case that Lu's invitation coincided with Mazu's arrival in Hongzhou. When he moved to Hongzhou, Mazu was followed by some of his close disciples, including Baizhang, but some of his disciples decided (or perhaps were asked by him) to stay at Gonggong mountain. Among those disciples who stayed behind, Xitang emerged as the leader of the community at Gonggong mountain.

Kaiyuan monastery was part of the network of state-sponsored monasteries that was established by emperor Xuanzong in 739, towards the end of the Kaiyuan era (713–

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[107] SGSZ 10, T 50.766b.

[108] Biographies in JTS 122.3499–3551, and XTS 138.4623–24.

[109] Suzuki, *Tō-godai no zenshū*, p. 115, states that Mazu was invited to Kaiyuan monastery by Lu. The stele inscription, however, does not state that—it only says that Lu invited Mazu to the official residence (*lisuo*), and it does not mention Kaiyuan monastery at all. Most other sources indicate that Mazu was already residing in the monastery when he first met Lu. The SGSZ account of his move to Kaiyuan monastery suggests that Mazu met Lu only after he took up residence at Kaiyuan monastery, which would mean that Lu was not the one who initiated Mazu's move to Hongzhou. At the same time, however, Xitang's biography in SGSZ 10 (T 50.766c) states that Lu invited Mazu to the prefectural capital (i.e. Hongzhou).

[110] For Lu's assumption of the governorship of Jiangxi, see Daizong's basic annals in JTS 11.299. However, while there it is stated that he became a civil governor of Jiangxi in 772, according to Lu's biography in JTS 122.3500, he assumed the post during the seventh month of the previous year (771). See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 137.

741).[111] The monastery was located in the prefectural capital of Hongzhou prefecture, close to the border between Nanchang county 南昌縣 and Xinjian county 新建縣.[112] Originally the monastery was established during the reign of King Yuzhang 豫章王 (r. 551–552), towards the end of the Liang 梁 dynasty (502–557). Until the early eighth century, the name of the monastery was Dafo (Great Buddha) monastery 大佛寺, and when Xuanzong's edict was enacted the name was changed to Kaiyuan monastery.[113]

Kaiyuan monastery was one of the most important monasteries in the area. As an official establishment, it had close connections with the local government. It is not clear who was behind Mazu's stay at the monastery, and it is also not evident if Mazu was asked to formally assume the abbacy of Kaiyuan monastery. Considering Mazu's stature, the large monastic following he had, and the scope of his teaching activities, it would seem plausible to presume that Mazu indeed became the monastery's abbot. Probably Mazu had to have the backing of powerful local officials in order to assume such a post, but if Lu came to Hongzhou only after Mazu was already residing there, he cannot have been involved in the choice of Mazu as an abbot. Though it is possible that he was recommended by Pei Xu, as suggested by Nishiguchi, there is no evidence to confirm that was the case.[114]

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[111] See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 53–54.

[112] See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 139.

[113] *Jiangxi tongzhi* 江西通志 121.2519b, and Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 115.

[114] Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 139. Nishiguchi also suggests that although Mazu did reside at Kaiyuan monastery for two to three years, after he accepted Lu's invitation he moved to the official government residence. Nishiguchi speculates that Mazu taught from there till the end of his life, and did not return to Kaiyuan monastery at all. Ibid. Nishiguchi's supposition is based on dubious interpretation of the passage in Mazu's stele inscription that recounts Lu's invitation to come to reside at his official residence. It is hard to imagine that Mazu would have left the monastery and stayed at Lu's official residence for an extended period (over a decade, according to Nishiguchi), effectively

Mazu's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* relates an episode that took place during the Jianzhong 建中 era (780–783), when Mazu was residing at Kaiyuan monastery, that sheds light on Mazu's relationship with the local officials and the importance of his close ties with them.[115] At that time there was an imperial edict that stipulated that monks must return to the temples in which they were registered.[116] It is not clear at which temple Mazu was registered, but apparently he was not registered at Kaiyuan monastery, and in order to comply with the edict he had to leave Hongzhou and move to back to his old residence (which might have meant to his old monastery at Gonggong mountain). At that time Bao Fang 鮑防 (723–790), who in 780 assumed the post of civil governor of Jiangxi—Lu Sigong had left the post in 778—helped Mazu to evade the order and remain at Kaiyuan monastery.[117] By this time Mazu seems to have been well connected with the local authorities, which undoubtedly helped his sizeable monastic community in its dealings with the local government. Mazu's increasingly close ties with government officials probably also enhanced his monastic community's prospects for receiving private support from the wider local community, which was in addition to the government support Kaiyuan monastery already received as a part of the state-sponsored network of monasteries.

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using it as a monastery where he taught the throngs of disciples who flocked to him. Nishiguchi's hypothesis makes even less sense when we consider that Lu left Hongzhou in 778.

[115] SGSZ 10, T 50.766b.

[116] I am note sure which edict the text is referring to. Though during his early reign Dezong did envision various measures that aimed to control the spread of Buddhism and curb the activities of Buddhist monks and monasteries, many of which were proposed by his Confucian advisers, most of these measures were never implemented. I have been unable to find information about the government's attempts to enforce a policy similar to the one described in the text. For Dezong's early policies towards Buddhism, see Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 89–93.

[117] For Bao Fang's biographies, see JTS 146.3956, and XTS 159.4949–50.

During his stay at Kaiyuan monastery, which lasted close to two decades—from around 770 until his death in 788—Mazu continued to attract ever increasing numbers of disciples. He already started to became a relatively well-known Chan teacher during his stay at Gonggong mountain, and once he moved to Hongzhou his renown grew in proportion to the number of the disciples who came to study with him. It was at Kaiyuan monastery that the elderly Mazu fully emerged as the leader of the Chan School in the Jiangnan area. The disciples who came to study during this period included Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願(748–834), Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (761–823), Guizong Zhichang 歸宗知常 (d.u.), Xingshan Weikuan 興善惟寬 (755–817), Zhangjing Huaihui 章敬懷暉 (756–815), Danxia Tianran 丹霞天然 (739–824), Dongsi Ruhui 東寺如會 (744–823), Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807), and Furong Taiyu 芙蓉太毓 (747–826).

### Literati Connections and Lay Supporters

In the preceding pages I already alluded to some of the local officials with whom Mazu established connections. Pei Xu, who went to study Buddhism with Mazu while the later was residing at Gonggong mountain, was the first official whose relationship with Mazu is noted in the extant sources. All the other officials about whom we have information came into contact with Mazu during his years at Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou. Understanding the personal connections between Mazu and these officials is important because these associations shed significant light on the political and economic support-structures that were behind the institutional frameworks within which Mazu led his religious life and taught his disciples. The webs of social relationships that underlined those structures are an important part of the outer forces that shaped Mazu's teaching career, and influenced the future development of the Hongzhou School. Who were the

officials with whom Mazu had close contacts, and what did their patronage and support mean for Mazu and his monastic community?

Lu Sigong and Bao Fang, both of who already appeared in the preceding pages, were officials who started their careers during the later half of Xuanzong's long reign. Lu's original name was Jianke 劍客, and he was given the name Sigong (lit. "successor of Gong") by Xuanzong after Lu Gong 魯恭 of the Later Han 後漢 dynasty (25–220).[118] During his official career Lu held a number of provincial posts, and he also had an appointment in the Department of State Affairs (*Shangshusheng* 尚書省). In the course of his tenure as a civil governor of Jiangxi during the period of 772–778—at the beginning of which he came in contact with Mazu—Lu proved himself to be a capable administrator. He was later enfeoffed as the duke of Ji 冀 (which is how he is referred to in Mazu's stele inscription).

Bao Fang was a native of Xiangyang in Xiangzhou 襄州襄陽 (in present-day Hubei province). Although he lost his parents while still young and endured poverty during his youth, he applied himself to his studies and developed good writing skills. He obtained the *jinshi* 進士 degree in 756. During his early official career he served in a number of junior posts in the capital and the provinces, and after the end of the rebellion he received successive appointments as a governor of Fujian and Jiangxi. He was subsequently appointed as a vice minister (*shilang* 侍郎) in the Board of Rites, and was enfeoffed as the duke of Tonghai commandery 東海郡.[119]

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[118] XTS 138.4623. For Lu Gong's biography, see *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 55.

[119] JTS 146.3956, XTS 159.4949–50; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 121.

During the final years of Mazu's life, one of his closest lay disciples was Li Jian 李兼.[120] Li became a governor of Jiangxi in 785, three years before Mazu's death.[121] Mazu's stele inscription says the following about Li: "He was diligent in his protection of the dharma sincerely, and he received master's last teaching."[122] As we will see in the next section, Li received Mazu's final religious instructions, and he was also involved in the organizing of Mazu's funeral and the construction of Mazu's memorial pagoda. Li continued his support of Mazu's community after Mazu's death. He developed an especially close relationship with Xitang, with whom he continued his study of Buddhism.[123]

Other noted officials with whom Mazu was associated were the writers of his two inscriptions, Quan Deyu and Bao Ji. Quan, who in addition to a successful bureaucratic career also achieved fame as a writer, lost his father when he was only seven years old.[124] He showed literary talent from a very young age, and by the time he was fifteen he had already written several hundred literary pieces. Quan probably first met Mazu in 785, at the age of twenty-six, when he received the junior post of an executive officer in the provincial administration of Li Jian, who (as already noted) at the time was the governor

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[120] The stele inscription refers to him as Li of Chengji 成紀, while SGSZ gives his name as Li of Longxi 隴西. His identification as Li Jian is based on the extant stone inscription from Mazu's memorial pagoda unearthed in Baofeng monastery, which gives his complete name, Li Jian. Both Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 121, and Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 142, correctly identify him as Li Jian on basis of inferential evidence.

[121] See JTS 12.348, as well as Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 144, n. 49.

[122] QTW 501.5106b.

[123] See Xitang's biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.766c.

[124] For his biographies, see JTS 148.4001–05, and XTS 165.5076–80. For the text of his funeral inscription, which was composed by Han Yu, and a Japanese translation of it, see Ogawa Tamaki 小川環樹, ed., *Tōdai no shijin: sono denki* 唐代の詩人—その傳記, pp. 321–34.

of Jiangxi and a lay disciple of Mazu. In 792 Quan was recommended to Emperor Dezong by Pei Zhou 裴胄 (729–803), who succeeded Li as a governor of Jiangxi in 791.[125] Pei Zhou was a cousin of Mazu's disciple Pei Xu (see above), and after Mazu's death he also became a supporter of Mazu's community, developing especially close ties with Xitang.[126] With the help of Pei's recommendation, in 792 Quan received the post of scholar at the Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*taichang boshi* 太常博士). Subsequently, Quan had a distinguished official career, during which he occupied a number of posts in both the central government and the provinces. During the reign of emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806–820), he rose to the position of grand councilor. Throughout his life Quan associated with numerous Buddhist monks, including the famous Huayan exegete Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) and Mazu's disciple Huaihui, who was active in the capital during the 810s.[127] In 791 Quan visited Mazu's newly-completed memorial stupa, and according to his own account "as I paid my respects I was able to briefly dispel my ignorance."[128] On that occasion he was asked by Mazu's disciples to write Mazu's stele inscription, and he granted their request. In addition to Mazu's stele inscription, Quan also wrote stele inscriptions for many other monks, including a stele inscription for Huaihui.[129]

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[125] For Pei Zhou's biographies, see JTS 122.3507–08, and XTS 130.4491–92.

[126] See Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 135.

[127] In Chengguan's biography in SGSZ 5, T 50.737a-c, Quan is mentioned as one of the ten noted officials who were associated with Chengguan.

[128] QTW 501.5106b–7a.

[129] *Tang gu Zhangjingsi Baiyan dashi beiming bingxu* 唐故章敬寺百巖大師碑銘并序, by Quan Deyu, QTW 501.5103b–04a, and WYYH 866.4568a-b. Huaihui's life is discussed in Chapter Six.

Finally, Bao Ji, the author of Mazu's memorial inscription (which is no longer extant), was a native of Yanling in Ruzhou 延陵潤州.[130] His father Bao Rong 包融 was a scholar of the Jixian academy 集賢院. Bao Ji, who was a *jinshi* degree holder, was also a man of some literary talent. Bao Ji's official career suffered a setback in 777, when he was exiled to Lingnan 嶺南 (present-day Guangdong province) during the purges that followed the removal from power and subsequent execution of Yuan Zai 元載 (d. 777), the powerful chief minister who from 762 to 777 exerted great influence on state policy. However, Bao was soon pardoned, and was appointed as a tax commissioner responsible for implementing the dual-tax system (*liangshui fa* 兩稅法), first introduced in 780 (the second year of Dezong's reign), in the eastern part of Biansong 汴宋 province (present-day Henan). He was eventually enfeoffed as the duke of Danyang 丹陽. It is not clear when (or even if) Bao met Mazu. Since there are no records indicating that he was ever assigned to a post in the Hongzhou area, the circumstances of his involvement in the writing of Mazu's memorial inscription are also not clear.[131] However, as there is some indication that Bao was associated with Quan Deyu and Li Jian, his connection with them might have been a factor that led to his writing of Mazu's memorial inscription.[132]

Both Quan Deyu, the author of Mazu's stele inscription, and Zanning, the author of his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, placed considerable emphasis on Mazu's connections with powerful local government officials. That is indicative of the

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[130] He only has a brief biography in XTS 149.4798–99.

[131] Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 122, speculates that he might have met Mazu when he was exiled to Lingnan in 777. Bao might have passed though Hongzhou, where Mazu resided at that time, on the way to or from Lingnan, but there is no evidence to prove that he actually did so.

[132] See Ibid. Suzuki also speculates that Quan Deyu and Bao Ji's stele inscriptions mentioned in Mazu's biography in SGSZ might refer to the same original stele inscription, but I think that his contention is based on a mistaken reading of the relevant SGSZ passage.

importance that ties with such officials had for the early development of the Hongzhou School. The fact that during his stay at Kaiyuan monastery Mazu could count on the official support of at least three of the provincial governors (and presumably the rest of the local authorities) explains a lot about the favorable socioeconomic circumstances that were one of the reasons behind the rapid growth of Mazu's monastic community. Without the political and economic support that Mazu and his community received from these officials, it might have been much more difficult for Mazu to enter the ranks of leading monks in Jiangxi. It is hard to imagine that such institutional and social settings did not have any impact on Mazu's religious teachings. Mazu's role as a leader of an official monastery probably placed him in a position where acceptance of mainstream Buddhist mores and practices was the norm, and there is little indication that he had any problem with that.

There is little in Mazu's biography to support the argument made by Yanagida and other scholars about his role as a religious revolutionary who outrightly rejected existing Buddhist beliefs and institutions, and charted a completely new course for Chinese Buddhism. Mazu was very much a member of the local religious establishment in the Jiangxi region. As such, he had constant dealings with the local officials, in which he played the roles of a Chan teacher and abbot of an important local monastery. The second of these roles required adoption of more conservative attitudes, and a certain level of adherence to the conventional norms that guided the pursuit of such functions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Had Mazu instead decided to live as a recluse in the mountains, the history of Chan Buddhism might look quite different from the one we study today. But if that were the case, probably that would be a history in which the Hongzhou School

would play a much smaller role in the historical development of Chan Buddhism than it actually did.

It is interesting to note the difference in the economic sponsorship received by Mazu's communities at Gonggong mountain and at Kaiyuan monastery on the one hand, and the communities of other famous Chan teachers of the preceding generations on the other. Earlier notable Chan monks in the North, like Shenxiu and Shenhui, had as their supporters many prominent officials of the central government and members of the aristocracy, including the royal family. On the other hand, Mazu's supporters were for the most part provincial administrators who gradually came to power only after the end of the rebellion. They were powerful local officials who, though nominated by the central government, wielded considerable regional power and were able to act independently.[133] The shift of the pattern of economic sponsorship away from the central government and aristocracy, and towards increased reliance on support from local officials, of which Mazu and his monastic community are an example, coincided with the shift of the geographical center of Chan School's activities from the North to the South. Imperial support of course continued to be a significant factor that contributed to the flourishing of Buddhism during the post-rebellion period. Nonetheless, during the late eight century more important for the increasing strength of the Chan movement in the South was the shift of political and economic power to the provinces, a situation that was the result of the weakening of central governmental institutions. This new development brought about different patterns of economic sponsorship for the Buddhist community, with the Chan schools in the South, especially Mazu's Hongzhou School, being able to benefit from the economic and political patronage of the increasingly powerful local rulers and officials,

[133] Ishikawa Rikisan, "Basokyodan no tenkai to sono shijishatachi," pp. 162–63.

as well as from the increasing importance of the South in the political and economic life of the Tang empire.

### Final Days and Passing Away at Shimen Mountain

During the final years of his life, Mazu reached the peak of his monastic career. He was a leader of a large and flourishing monastic community, a successful teacher surrounded by numerous able and devoted disciples, and an important religious figure respected by the local officials and gentry. In 788, the final year of his life, Mazu was seventy-nine years old. He had been a monk for sixty years, and had been teaching and training disciples for over forty years. According to both the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography and the stele inscription, one month before his passing away, in February 788, Mazu traveled to Shimen mountain 石門山 in Jianchang 建昌.[134] Shimen was located in the north-west corner of Hongzhou prefecture, approximately 100 km (as the crow flies) from the prefectural capital. Mazu's connection with Shimen is not clear, but as this mountain was to become his resting place, as well as a religious center for the Hongzhou School after his passing away, it is quite probable that during the last years of his life Mazu had a connection with the monastery located on the mountain, which was known as Letan monastery 泐潭寺.[135] It is likely that he spend at least some of his time during the final years of his life at this monastery, which in all likelihood provided a quieter environment than Kaiyuan monastery.

According to the stele inscription, while walking through Shimen mountain accompanied by some of his disciples, Mazu "designated a clear and open area at Shimen

[134] QTW 501.5106b, and SGSZ 10, T 50.766b. The visit to Shimen is also recorded in TGDL 8, XZJ 135.327d. For Shimen mountain, see *Yudi jisheng* 26.1158.

[135] See *Jiangxi tongzhi* 江西通志 50.1082b, and 121.2526a; and Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 117.

as his final resting place. All of a sudden he told his close disciples, 'When the second month arrives I will return [here]. Take a note of it.'"[136] Premonitions about imminent death such as this one are a frequent motif in the hagiographies of Chan monks. They serve as testimonials to monks' great spiritual achievements, especially the greatest achievement of all: mastery over the cycle of birth and death (samsara). Just like the Buddha, the story implies, Mazu also did what needed to be done: having first achieved spiritual awakening, he then compassionately instructed others about the way to spiritual liberation. Finally, when it was time for him to leave this world, he did that in a calm, controlled, and dignified manner, as one would expect from a saintly and spiritually accomplished monk.

During his stay at Shimen Mazu became sick. He then indicated to his disciples that he would be leaving them soon "so that he can be buried in the remote mountain (i.e. Shimen mountain)."[137] During this final period Li Jian, who was the local governor at that time, was at the side of the ailing Mazu. According to Quan Deyu's account, Mazu gave the following final teachings to the devout Li:

> [The master taught Li that,] generally speaking, for the sake of the one [vehicle] one should forsake the three [vehicles], and one should renounce the provisional [teaching] in order to approach the true [teaching]. He revealed the unchanging, immaculate nature, and the teaching that is without discrimination and gradualness. Once he said, "The Buddha is not far away from people, and he is to be realized by comprehending the mind; the dharma does not incorporate

[136] QTW 501.5106b.

[137] SGSZ 10, T 50.766b. A famous story which appears in later sources, and which might be of apocryphal origin, describes a conversation between Mazu and monastery's head monk about his illness: "Not long afterwards the Master become ill. The head monk asked him, 'How is the Venerable feeling these days?' The Master replied, 'Sun-Face Buddha, Moon-Face Buddha.'" MY, XZJ 119.405b; translation from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 61. The same story also appears in *Biyan lu* (case no. 3), T 48.142c.

anything, and the external objects are all suchness—how could it be divided into many?"[138]

There is some confusion among the sources about the place of Mazu's death. It is unclear whether he died at Kaiyuan monastery or at Shimen mountain. The earliest sources—the stele inscription and the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography—do not give the exact location of his death, and most later sources are also ambiguous about this point. A note inserted in the Song edition of *Chuandeng lu* states that he died in Kaiyuan monastery and was cremated at Shimen mountain.[139] That is a possible scenario, as it could be that Mazu returned to Kaiyuan shortly before his death. Nonetheless, it is unclear why he would have returned to Kaiyuan monastery if he wanted to be buried at Shimen. Moreover, if he indeed died at Kaiyuan monastery, it still seems more reasonable to assume that the body would have been cremated close to the monastery, rather than be subjected to what would have been at least a few days journey back to Shimen.

It seems more probable that Mazu did not return to Kaiyuan, but instead passed his final days and died at Shimen, and was subsequently cremated and buried there in accord with his earlier request.[140] However, the early descriptions of his elaborate funeral (see below) seem to indicate that he died at Kaiyuan monastery. The large scale of the funerary services and the fact that the provincial governor and most of Mazu's disciples were present at the occasion make it appear that the funeral took place in Hongzhou's

[138] QTW 501.5106b.

[139] CDL 6.106. The information provided in the note is suspect, however, since it quotes Quan Deyu's stele inscription as a source for this information, even though the stele inscription does not mention that.

[140] This is the tentative conclusion reached by Nishiguchi, p. 142. *Yudi jisheng* 26.1157, also states that Mazu died at Baofeng temple 寶峰院 in Shimen mountain during the Zhengyuan 正元 era (which is a mistake—it should read 貞元), and that his relics were preserved at the mountain.

prefectural capital, rather than at a remote mountain monastery. As there are various pieces of indirect evidence that point to either Shimen or Kaiyuan monastery as the location of Mazu's death, it is impossible to determine conclusively where Mazu passed away (though to me at least, Shimen seems to be a more convincing choice).

Mazu passed away on March 13, 788 (the first day of the second month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan era).[141] The early sources describe Mazu's final moments in a similar fashion, closely adhering to a pattern that is representative of the medieval Buddhist hagiographic tradition. Depictions of the self-controlled and dignified ways in which medieval monks entered their final journey are indicative of their physical and spiritual mastery over the realm of phenomenal reality, which was a result of their perfection of religious life. According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, when the time of his departure from this world approached, Mazu conducted himself in the same manner as usual. On his final day he washed and purified himself in preparation for the last moments of his long life. He then "in a stern and dignified manner" sat cross-legged and "entered extinction" (i.e. Nirvana).[142] In the same vein, Quan Deyu writes that, "when it was time for him to die, the master set cross-legged and announced his passing away. When he was about to truly die, it was like putting together the two halves of a tally."[143]

Mazu's funeral was a grand and elaborate affair, organized by his senior disciples and Li Jiang, who was probably also helped by the local officials who were working under him. Wishing to follow "Western" (i.e., Indian) customs, in evident deference to the Buddhist traditions that were transmitted from India to China, Mazu's disciples

[141] Following the stone inscription from Baofeng monastery.

[142] SGSZ 10, T50.766b

[143] QTW 501.5106b.

decided to cremate his body in a traditional way.[144] Zanning compares Mazu's funeral service to the grand ceremonies performed at the burials of two well-known monks who lived during the earlier part of the Tang era: Shandao 善導 (613–681), the great propagator of faith in Amitābha Buddha's Pure Land, and Huayan 華嚴 (i.e., Puji 普寂, 651–739), one of the leaders of the Northern School of Chan.[145] Quan Deyu describes the funeral procession in the following way:

> When [the master's death] did actually occur during the second month, it corresponded to the torching [of Buddha's body] at Kuśinagara. Monks and lay people, young and old, lost their voices [from crying too much], and approached the road [on which the funeral procession was passing]. While [the procession] was crossing a dried up stream, there was a torrential splash of dharma rain, and when they reached the monastery gate there appeared varied mists of heavenly fragrances. On that occasion, when there was such a mystical response, the ignorant were unaware of it.[146]

Quan Deyu's comparison of Mazu's funeral with that of the Buddha is perhaps a reflection of the surviving disciples' belief that the deceased Mazu had achieved the ultimate perfection of religious life. The description of the auspicious preternatural occurrences that supposedly occurred during the funeral procession are presented as further evidence of Mazu's great spiritual attainments.

Following Mazu's wishes about his final resting place, his remains were buried at Shimen, at the site previously chosen by him. Soon after Mazu's death his disciples decided to build a memorial pagoda on the grounds of Letan monastery. The pagoda was

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[144] Ibid. It is not entirely clear what the "traditional way" was.

[145] SGSZ 10, T50.766b. For Shandao's life see Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvatī: Shan-tao's Commentary of the* Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching, pp. 79–104.

[146] QTW 501.5106b. The last sentence is an allusion to the passage in the *Lotus Srcipture*, in which the arhats fail to see the preternatural powers displayed by the Buddha, even though they are fully visible to the bodhisattvas.

finished in 791 and was named Da Zhuangyan (Great Adornment) pagoda 大莊嚴塔. On the occasion of the opening of the pagoda and the enshrining of Mazu's relics in it, Quan Deyu was asked to write an inscription for it. Subsequently the name of Letan monastery was changed to Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺.[147] During the Yuanhe 元和 era (806–821) of Emperor Xianzong's reign, Mazu received the imperially-bestowed title Daji Chanshi 大寂禪師 (Chan Master of Grand Quiescence).[148] According to a note inserted in the Song edition of *Chuandeng lu*, the monastery and Mazu's pagoda were damaged during the Huichang era (841–845) persecution of Buddhism. After the end of the persecution, the next emperor, Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 847–860), ordered Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860), who at the time was a governor of Jiangxi and a student of Mazu's second-generation disciple Huangbo, to restore both of them.[149]

Many of Mazu's disciples eventually became well-known teachers, and through their proselytizing activities they spread Mazu's teachings throughout much of the Tang empire. As we will see in Chapters Five and Six, within the few decades following Mazu's death the Hongzhou School emerged as the main school of Chan Buddhism. But before I turn to those events, in the next chapter I will examine in greater detail a few notable aspects of Mazu's life and religious career.

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[147] *Jiangxi tongzhi* 121.2526; Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 142.

[148] SGSZ 10, T50.766c.

[149] CDL 6.106.

Chapter 4

# *Facets of Mazu's Life*

This chapter is intended to serve as a supplement to the biography of Mazu that was presented in Chapter Three. In it I will explore in greater detail a few significant aspects of Mazu's life and teaching career. In the first section I will discuss the relationship between Mazu and Chan in Sichuan, and try to ascertain the long-term impact of the Chan traditions that flourished in Mazu's native province on the development of his intellectual outlook and religious personality. In the second section, I will examine Mazu's interaction with other noted Chan teachers who were his contemporaries, focusing on his connections with the main representatives of the Niutou School of Chan whose teaching careers corresponded with Mazu's. That will be followed with a brief consideration of Mazu's relationship with Shitou, the Chan teacher whom the later Chan tradition came to consider, along with Mazu, as the leader of the second generation of Huineng's disciples.

## Mazu and Sichuan Chan

During the eighth century, Sichuan was an area in which various Chan teachings flourished. Since during his early formative years Mazu came in contact with some of them, there arises a question about the possible influences that Mazu's early teachers and other fellow monks in Sichuan exerted on the subsequent development of his understanding of the Buddhist path. What was the impact of the religious milieu he

encountered during his early monastic years in Sichuan on the contents of his own religious teachings, and on the teaching methods he employed during his later career? As I try to answer these questions, I will first survey the Chan traditions that were active in eighth century Sichuan, and then examine Mazu's relationship with them.

In addition to the Jingzhong lineage of Wuxiang that was discussed in the previous chapter, during the eight century the best-known Sichuan Chan lineage was the Baotang lineage. This lineage derived its name from Baotang monastery in Chengdu, the monastery where its leader Wuzhu 無住 (714–774) resided. Since *Lidai fabao ji*, the main record of the Baotang lineage's "history" and teachings, asserts that Wuzhu was a disciple of Wuxiang, the Jingzhong and Baotang lineages are sometimes (incorrectly) lumped together as a single Sichuan Chan tradition.[1] This failure to distinguish properly between the two has led to some problematic interpretations of the relationship between Mazu's Chan teachings and those of the Chan tradition(s) in Sichuan.

Both Shenqing and Zongmi criticized the Baotang lineage because of its radical teachings and unconventional practices. Adopting the Chan doctrine of "no thought" (*wunian* 無念)—previously popularized by Shenhui, whose influence is evident in the *Lidai fabao ji*—Wuzhu is said to have interpreted its teaching in such a way so as to justify his rejection of traditional Buddhist practices and his disdain for strict adherence to ethical and ritual observances. This iconoclastic attitude was supposedly manifested in Wuzhu's antinomian stance and unconventional conduct, which among other things included the subversion of proper monastic procedures. A notable example of this was Wuzhu's conferring of monastic status upon aspirants without a proper ordination ceremony. Instead of following traditional ordination rituals, Zongmi tells us, Wuzhu

[1] See *Lidai fabao ji*, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II: Rekidai hōbōki*, pp. 169–72.

improperly dispensed with the standard procedures and admitted people to monastic life by simply shaving their heads and handing them monastic robes.[2] Wuzhu's and his followers' distaste for ceremonies apparently did not stop there. We are also told that they rejected all forms of religious worship and ritual, and were also against the reading and copying of the Buddhist scriptures.[3] Having thus rejected the traditional mores and practices of Chinese Buddhism, the Baotang School placed exclusive emphasis on the practice of no-thought, the perfection of which became the sole aim of spiritual life. At the same time, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to learn that while Wuzhu thus emphasized perfect detachment and non-discrimination, he was also very much concerned about proselytizing. We are told that Wuzhu regularly held large public meetings at which he taught the masses and tried to elicit their support, just as Wuxiang and Shenhui had done before him.[4]

More conservative Chan monks, like Shenqing and Zongmi, were critical of the Baotang School's radical ideas and practices because for them the antinomian notions that underlined them were inimical to those basic Buddhist values they considered to be essential for proper religious life. In reference to the Baotang School's practices, Shenqing writes in his *Beishan lu*:

> Some teach that having any intention to practice Buddhism or having anything to study is the teaching of the *śrāvakas*. Thus, [according to their interpretation,] only when one forsakes [the Buddha and the bodhisattva] images and when one abandons the scriptures can it be called the sudden teaching. If one were to have

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[2] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, XZJ 14.278d; also quoted in Yanagida, "Mujū to Shūmitsu: Tongo shisō no keisei o megutte" 無住と宗密—頓悟思想の形成をめぐって, *Hanazono daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 花園大學研究紀要 7 (1976), p. 22, which is translated into English in Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," p. 33.

[3] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, XZJ 14.278d.

[4] See Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," p. 31.

anything to teach, he should determine the texts within himself. What need is there for exegesis or commentary?... It sounds like the words of the sages, but it is indeed far away from the way of the sages![5]

For Shenqing, although the Baotang School's rejection of worship, scripture, and exegesis at first sight seemed to resemble some statements accepted by the orthodox tradition of Buddhism, their attitudes about religious practice, intellectual study, and the like, were based on misconceived interpretations of the nature of the Buddhist path. Such false understanding of spiritual life was then applied by the followers of the Baotang School in the course of their religious activities in ways that undermined proper spiritual cultivation and established wrong precedents that were detrimental to the flourishing of Buddhism.

Yanagida has suggested that both Mazu's teaching and Zongmi's thought were shaped by trends and issues that emerged within the Chan movement in their native Sichuan, especially as it was represented by Wuzhu and his Baotang School.[6] In reference to the connection between Wuzhu and Zongmi, Yanagida writes that Zongmi's thought would have never achieved the intellectual vitality evidenced in his doctrines about sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation and the unity of Chan and the teaching without the powerful challenge and stimulation provided by Wuzhu's radical Chan teachings.[7] Following Yanagida's interpretation, Peter Gregory has also speculated that Zongmi's acquaintance with the Baotang School shaped his perception of the antinomian dangers inherent in the radical teachings of Mazu's Hongzhou School.[8]

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[5] T 52.612c; translation adapted from Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi,*" p. 32.

[6] Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi,*" pp. 42–43. See also Peter Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, p. 248.

[7] Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi,*" p. 43.

[8] Gregory, *Tsung-mi*, pp. 18, 250.

I think there has been a tendency to somewhat exaggerate the possible impact Wuzhu exerted on Zongmi, and to draw unwarranted parallels between the teachings and practices of the Baotang and Hongzhou traditions. First of all, in none of Zongmi's writing does the Baotang School play prominent role. In *Pei Xiu sheyiwen*, the Baotang School is presented as a local tradition of minor importance, and it is afforded only a brief section. In *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, the Baotang School's beliefs and practices are described in slightly more detail, but it is still presented as a tradition of lesser importance, while in *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* the Baotang School is not mentioned at all. In addition, it is questionable how informed Zongmi was about the Baotang tradition. There is also no evidence that Zongmi ever read *Lidai fabao ji*, the main record of Wuzhu's teachings.

Zongmi's short descriptions of Wuzhu's teachings and practices are quite superficial, and at some crucial points they do not correspond with the actual transcripts of Wuzhu's sermons as they were recorded in *Lidai fabao ji*. For example, Zongmi describes the Baotang tradition as bibliophobic and portrays Wuzhu as someone who abhorred Buddhist doctrines and was against the study of scriptures. However, the Wuzhu presented in *Lidai fabao ji* is a monk with intellectual predilections who is fond of quoting Buddhist scriptures and treatises, as well as non-Buddhist texts (including *Laozi* 老子 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子).[9] Moreover, it is somewhat questionable if Wuzhu would have been able to flout so openly both the monastic and the secular rules that governed ordination of monks during the eight century, as he is described as doing by Zongmi. That is even more unlikely if we consider that he was living and teaching in a large monastery in the provincial capital, and that he had as his supporters important government

[9] See Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, pp. 25–27, and Idem, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," pp. 35–36.

officials.[10] Monastic ordinations were controlled by the Tang state, and a patent disregard of the monastic and secular laws probably would have elicited some reaction from the authorities, even for a monk who was as well connected with those in high positions as Wuzhu.

Of course, Zongmi was from Sichuan and he had firsthand experience of Sichuan Chan. But as far as we know, he did not have personal interaction with any of Wuzhu's disciples. Zongmi's earliest contact with Chan was in 804, when at the age of twenty-four he met his first teacher Daoyuan 道圓 (d.u.).[11] That was exactly thirty years after Wuzhu's death, and there is no record to indicate that at the time the Baotang School was still active. During his early study of Chan in Sichuan, Zongmi mainly associated himself with monks affiliated with Wuxiang's Jingzhong lineage. Moreover, Zongmi's study of Chan in Sichuan was quite short. It lasted only four years, until 808, when he left Sichuan, supposedly on the advice of Daoyuan's teacher Weizhong 惟忠 (d. 821).[12] Therefore, from all we know, Zongmi had only a relatively brief experience of Chan in Sichuan, and during that period his study with Chan teachers there was limited to monks who belonged to the Jingzhong lineage.

In his writings about Chan, Zongmi clearly distinguishes between the Baotang and the Jingzhong traditions, although he does note the similarities in their teachings. According to him, Wuzhu was not a disciple of Wuxiang, as the Baotang School claimed. Instead, Zongmi wrote that Wuzhu's teacher was Chen Chuzhang 陳楚 章, a lay disciples

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[10] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, XZJ 14.278d. See also Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," p. 33.

[11] See *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, XZJ 14.222b, and Gregory, *Tsung-mi*, p. 33.

[12] Gregory, *Tsung-mi*, p. 53.

of Laoan 老安 (584–708).[13] In order to gain legitimacy, Wuzhu apparently falsely tried to present himself as Wuxiang's disciple, since it was much more advantageous to be perceived as a disciple of well-known and respected monk than of an obscure layman. Other monks associated with the Jingzhong lineage also shared Zongmi's view about the falsity of the Baotang School's claim that Wuzhu was a disciple of Wuxiang. For example, Wuxiang's disciple Shenqing was critical of Wuzhu's teachings, and he rejected Wuzhu's claim that he was a spiritual heir of Wuxiang.[14]

Furthermore, Zongmi's criticisms of the Baotang School's antinomian tendencies were not extended to the Jingzhong School. Zongmi was also careful to note the differences between the ordination rites observed by the Jingzhong School and the lax attitude toward monastic ordinations supposedly displayed by the Baotang School. On the whole, in his writings about Chan Zongmi displays markedly different attitudes towards the two schools. While he is sharply critical of the Baotang School's teachings and practices, he does not voice any sharp criticism of the Jingzhong School. Instead, in his writings about the Jingzhong School Zongmi simply describes their doctrines and practices in a rather matter-of-fact manner, without subjecting them to any sort of sustained critique.

The main points of the above discussion about Zongmi and Chan in Sichuan can be summarized as follows: [1] Zongmi clearly distinguished between the Baotang and Jingzhong lineages, and he was sharply critical only of the first of the two lineages; [2]

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[13] *Yuanjuejing dashuchao*, XZJ 14.278c. For *Lidai fabao ji*'s forgery of Wuzhu's lineage see Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," pp. 23–24. For Laoan's biography see SGSZ 18, T 50.823b-c, 829c–30a, ZTJ 3, p. 68, and his stele inscription in QTW 396, pp. 4040a–41a. See also McRae, *The Northern School*, p. 57–58.

[14] *Beishan lu*, T 52.611b. See also Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," p. 24.

his first-hand experience of Sichuan Chan was mostly limited to the Jingzhong lineage; [3] he was not too well acquainted with the Baotang lineage, and he considered this lineage a marginal regional tradition (which was, one might add, quite close to the truth). Considering the amount of attention and the kind of treatment Zongmi gives to the Baotang tradition, there is little pertinent evidence to substantiate the hypothesis that Wuzhu had a significant impact on the development of Zongmi's ideas about Chan. There is even less reason to assume that concerns about possible ramifications arising from Baotang School's antinomian teachings substantially influenced Zongmi's perception of the Hongzhou School.

Concerning the presumed connection between Mazu and the Baotang School, there is no evidence that Mazu was aware of the Baotang School's existence, let alone that he was in any way directly connected with or influenced by it. Wuzhu was five years Mazu's junior, and by the time he started to teach Mazu was already far away in southern China, having already left Sichuan long time before. The two monks had quite different careers, and they had little in common except for the fact that they were both monks born in Sichuan who had an interest in Chan Buddhism. Yanagida has suggested that there are affinities between Wuzhu's teachings—which supposedly placed emphasis on the infinite freedom in every moment of ordinary, every-day activities—and the revolutionary teachings of Mazu and his Hongzhou School.[15] For him Wuzhu's rejection of ritual, his dislike of fixed forms of doctrine and practice, and his unwillingness to accept any restrains on religious life formed a fresh approach to religious life, a kind of "radicalism to which religion always needs to return."[16] This kind of spirituality obviously reminds

[15] See Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi*," p. 40–41.

[16] Ibid., p. 33.

him of the Hongzhou School as conceived by him and other Japanese scholars, starting with D. T. Suzuki. As noted in the Introduction, according to their imagining, Mazu and his disciples established a radically new school of Chan that rejected the existing Buddhist tradition and charted a new course that forever completely changed the direction of Chinese Buddhism. However, as the present study demonstrates, such a distorted image of the Hongzhou School is based on questionable reading and interpretation of the extant sources. That is certainly not an accurate image that can be used to draw parallels between the religious teachings of Wuzhu and Mazu.[17] Neither the story of Mazu's life related in Chapter Three, nor the extant records of his and his disciples' teachings examined in Part Three of the present work, indicate that Mazu was a rebel who rejected all ritual and was unwilling to accept any restrains on religious life. Quite to the contrary, during his later life, Mazu became very much a part of the mainstream monastic establishment, and he assumed all the restrictions that his role of an abbot of a large official monastery placed on him.

What then was the impact of the Sichuan Chan tradition on Mazu's religious personality? How did the monks he studied with during his youth shape his intellectual orientation, and what was their impact on his conception of spiritual practice? As we do not have records about the teachings of Chuji, Mazu's first teacher, it is impossible to compare them with the extant records of Mazu's sermons and to try to ascertain the scope and depth of Chuji's probable influence on Mazu. Nishiguchi has suggested that Chuji's teachings included some form of recollection of the Buddha (*nianfo* 念佛).[18] That is quite possible, as recollection of the Buddha was popular among Hongren's disciples, and

[17] See the Introduction and Chapter Two.

[18] Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 116–17.

Chuji's teacher Zhishen might have taught it. Moreover, Nanyue Chengyuan, one of Chuji's best-known disciples, was a champion of Pure Land practice.[19] According to Tsukamoto Zenryū's extensive study of Pure Land Buddhism during the mid-Tang period, while he was a young disciple of Chuji, Chengyuan was interested in Chan, but he was also involved in Pure Land practices.[20] If indeed Pure Land ideas were popular at Chuji's monastery (as seems to have been the case), such notions are quite removed from the radical ideas that, according to Yanagida, the young Mazu encountered in Sichuan.[21]

It is difficult to postulate how close was the relationship between Mazu and Chuji. Some monks did form strong and lasting connections with the teacher under whom they "left home" (*chujia* 出家), the monk who was known as their *titoushi* 剃頭師 (lit. "master who shaves one's head").[22] For many monks, however, the relationship with their first teacher was mostly formal, and they eventually forged much stronger and more important links with other monks whom they met later in life, and whom they came to consider as their primary spiritual teachers. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient information about this period of Mazu's life to characterize clearly the exact nature of his relationship with Chuji, but there is no indication that later in life Mazu acknowledged

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[19] For a study of Chengyuan's life and his connections with Chan and Pure Land Buddhism, see Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, *Tō chūki no jōdokyō* 唐中期の淨土教, pp. 294–345. Additional information about his relationship with Mazu was presented in Chapter Three.

[20] Ibid., p. 343.

[21] Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," p. 117, speculates that the influence of Chuji's *nianfo* teachings can be seen in Mazu's famous statement "Sun-face Buddha, Moon-face Buddha," which according to late sources he made prior to his death. See MY, XZJ 119.405d. I fail to see any connection between the two. Nishiguchi's assertion seems to be a bit unwarranted, especially when we consider the fact that the story about Mazu's final illness in which this statement appears only in late sources and is most likely an apocryphal product of the Song period.

[22] See *Wufenlu* 五分律 15, T 22.102b, and the section on novice ordination in *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 9, XZJ 111.462a-d.

Chuji as his main teacher, nor is there any reason to believe that Chuji's teachings exerted dominant influence on Mazu's intellectual and spiritual development.

As far as Mazu's connection with Wuxiang is concerned, Zongmi's writings are the only sources that indicate that Mazu studied with Wuxiang. It is possible that Zongmi confused Mazu with Zhangsong Ma, another monk from Sichuan who was a disciple of Wuxiang and whose surname was also Ma.[23] Nonetheless, it is quite probable that the information provided by Zongmi about Mazu's connection with Wuxiang is correct. They were both disciples of the same teacher, and most likely they both were residents of Dechun monastery 德純寺 in Zizhou, the monastery where Chuji resided.[24] As we saw above, Wuxiang arrived at Dechun monastery in the early 730s, not long after Mazu's ordination. The two could have met there, as Mazu was probably residing at the monastery when Wuxiang arrived there. At that time Mazu was a junior monk in his early twenties, while Wuxiang was a mature and experienced monk who was fifteen years Mazu's senior.

If Mazu did study with Wuxiang, he was not the only disciple of Chuji to have done so. There is at least one additional record of a disciple of Chuji who studied with Wuxiang. According to Chengyuan's stele inscription, Chengyuan was a disciple of Chuji, but he also studied with Wuxiang.[25] If Mazu did indeed study with Wuxiang—which I think probably was the case—are there any traces in Mazu's mature teachings of direct influences that Wuxiang's ideas exerted on him?

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[23] See the discussion about this monk in Chapter Three.

[24] See *Lidai fabao ji*, in Yanagida, trans., *Shoki no zenshi II*, p. 140.

[25] QTW 630.6354, WYYH 866.4569a. See also Nishiguchi, "Baso no denki," pp. 116–17. That is another of the many parallels between Mazu's and Chengyuan's lives. As I already pointed out, they

If we compare the contents of the records of Wuxiang's teachings with those of Mazu and Mazu's disciples, there seems to be little indication that Mazu was noticeably influenced by Wuxiang's teachings. There is nothing in the records of Mazu and his disciples that corresponds with the teaching for which Wuxiang is best known, the doctrine of the "three phrases."[26] Moreover, the practice of "no thought"—which was popularized by Shenhui and which figures prominently in *Liuzu tanjing*—was also taught by Wuxiang, but this teaching likewise does not appear in any of Mazu's sermons. Among monks associated with the Hongzhou School, no-thought plays a prominent part only in the records of Huangbo, a famous monk who is traditionally considered a second-generation disciple of Mazu, but whose connection with the Hongzhou lineage is somewhat problematic.

Furthermore, the large repentance and ordination ceremonies for which Wuxiang was known were, as far as we know, not a part of Mazu's or his disciples religious activities. In this respect Wuxiang was much closer to Shenhui and the Chan schools in the North than to Mazu's Hongzhou School in the South. Moreover, Mazu did not follow Wuxiang's example of trying to reach the masses by preaching and performing rituals in front of large audiences. From all we know, Mazu was primarily concerned with the training of monks, and (as far as we can judge from the existing records) the lay people he had contact with were for the most part powerful local officials, not throngs of pious common people.

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also were of approximately the same age, were ordained by the same teacher, left Sichuan around the same time (possibly together), and studied at same sites in Southern China.

[26] There is a presentation of "three phases" in the record of Baizhang, Mazu's foremost disciple. Though Baizhang uses the same term, *sanju* 三句, as Wuxiang, the contents of his three phases have little in common with those of Wuxiang. See BGL, in *Guzunsu yulu* 1, XZJ 118.83a-b, 84d–85a. Baizhang's three phases will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

On the basis of the above inquiry into the relationship between Mazu and the Chan tradition in Sichuan, it seems there are no strong indications that Mazu's religious development was greatly dominated by the religious milieu he encountered in his formative years in Sichuan. Mazu's mature thought does not show any strong and clearly discernible direct influences stemming from the teachings of his early teachers in Sichuan, either in terms of the contents of his teachings, or in terms of the teaching style he used to communicate those teachings. Nonetheless, I think it would be a mistake to assume that Mazu's early contacts with Chan in Sichuan were not important to the development of his religious personality. The early yearly of monastic life are usually significant (often crucial) period for the development of monks' spiritual interests and attitudes. That is the time when basic religious outlooks, enduring habits, and fundamental intellectual predilections are formed. It is of great importance to note that from the very beginning of his monastic career Mazu was associated with monks connected to the Chan tradition. Even if Mazu did not use the specific ideas and practices he learned from his teachers in Sichuan when as a more mature monk in Fujian and Jiangxi he was formulating his own teachings, the teachings and personal examples of his early teachers probably influenced his perceptions of Buddhism and prompted him to look in certain directions for answers to his spiritual queries. Dissatisfaction with his teachers or the religious milieu in Sichuan might have been among the reasons for Mazu's decision to leave his native area, but probably to a large degree it was his contact with them that prepared the young Mazu for his further studies in southern China.

## Contacts with other Noted Chan Monks

Mazu's community at Gonggong mountain was not the only monastic community led by a monk associated with the Chan tradition that existed in the South around the time of the

An Lushan rebellion. Before the rebellion, most of the famous and influential Chan monks were mainly active in the North. At that time, the best-known Chan group was the so-called Northern School, which considered its leader Shenxiu as the main spiritual successor of the fifth Chan patriarch Hongren. After the rebellion, however, the South emerged as the major geographical center of the Chan School, and during the last few decades of the eighth century the southern Chan traditions gradually came to be widely recognized as the main representatives of the Chan movement.

It seems that Mazu was well aware of other Chan teachers in the South, and that he maintained friendly relations with some of them. A number of Mazu's disciples started their studies with other Chan teachers active in the South, and through them he was probably well informed about the teachings of these monks. There are also records which indicate that some of Mazu's disciples went to visit these teachers, sometimes on his own urging. These disciples often returned to Mazu with information about their meetings with other Chan monks and experiences in their communities. What was Mazu's disposition towards these Chan teachers and their teachings, and what does his attitude towards them tells us about the role of sectarian outlooks in the religious and institutional dynamics of the Chan School at the time? Let me try to answer these questions by looking into Mazu's interactions with teachers of the Niutou School.

During the period of Mazu's stay at Gonggong mountain, the Niutou School was one of the most active parts of the Chan movement in the South. This school of eight century Chan received its name from Niutou mountain (located south of present-day Nanjing), where its putative founder Farong 法融 (594–657) resided.[27] During the early post-rebellion period, the best-known monks associated with this school were Faqin of

[27] For his stele inscription, see QTW 606.6117b–18a.

Jingshan 徑山法欽 (a.k.a. Daoqin 道欽, 714–792)[28] and Huizhong 慧忠 (683–769). The second of these monks was recognized as the sixth patriarch of the Niutou School, and like Faqin's teacher Xuansu, he was a disciple of Zhiwei 智威 (646–722).[29]

Jing mountain, where Faqin had his monastery, was located in the vicinity of Hangzhou 杭州 (in present-day Zhejiang province). Faqin entered the mountain around 742, and he remained there until the Dali 大曆 era (766–780), when he went to the capital at the invitation of emperor Daizong.[30] Faqin had a long and distinguished teaching career, and his disciples included many noted officials and monks. There are records that at least three of Mazu's disciples went to visit him or to study with him: Xitang, Daowu 道悟 (748–807), and Danxia 丹霞 (738–823) (the last two also studied with Shitou). Among the three, Xitang went to see Faqin when he was already Mazu's disciple.[31] Faqin's short biography in *Zutang ji* includes a story in which Mazu sends Xitang to visit Jingshan and instructs him to ask some questions.[32] In *Chuandeng lu* there is a similar story in which Mazu send Xitang to Jingshan in order to deliver a letter.[33] Moreover, some of Mazu's early disciples were Faqin's students before they came to study with Mazu. Examples of this kind include the already-mentioned Funiu Zizai and Chaoan

[28] For biographical information, see his stele inscription in QTW 512.5206a–08a, as well as his biographies in SGSZ 9, T 50.764b–65a, and CDL 4.67–68. See also McRae, "The Ox-head School of Chinese Ch'an Buddhism: From Early Ch'an to the Golden Age," in Robert M. Gimello and Peter Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch'an and Hua Yen*, pp. 191–95.

[29] For Huizhong's biography see CDL 4.65. He is not to be confused with National Teacher Huizhong 慧忠國師 (675–775, a.k.a. Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠), an influential monk who was considered a disciple of Huineng (for his biography, see CDL 5.100–02).

[30] ZJL 3.65.

[31] CDL 7.120; SGSZ 10, T 50.766c.

[32] ZTJ 3.65.

[33] CDL 4.67.

(who was born in Danyang, Jiangsu, not far from Jingshan), as well as Ruhui of Dong (Eastern) monastery 東寺如會 (744–823).

In addition to Faqin's disciples, there were also disciples of other monks associated with the Niutou School who came to study with Mazu.[34] One such example was Furong Taiyu 芙蓉太毓 (747–826), who entered monastic life under Huizhong in 758. Soon after Taiyu received the full monastic precepts in 769, his teacher Huizhong died. He then went to study with Mazu, who at that time was residing in Hongzhou.[35] Concerning Mazu's interaction with Huizhong, there is also a story (of doubtful provenance) in the *Chuandeng lu*, according to which Mazu asked Xitang to go to the capital to deliver a letter to Huizhong.[36]

As pointed out by Yinshun, there are many examples of monks who started to study Chan with Niutou masters but eventually went on to became disciples of Mazu or Shitou. Moreover, though some of Mazu's disciples went to study with Jingshan and other Niutou masters, they still returned to Mazu and continued to consider themselves (or at least were considered so by the subsequent Chan tradition) disciples of Mazu. The numerous examples of monks who were originally students of teachers associated with the Niutou School but who eventually became Mazu's (and to a smaller extend Shitou's) disciples seem to indicate that although there was a lot of interaction between the Hongzhou and the Niutou groups, most of the monks who studied with both Mazu and Niutou teachers found Mazu to be a more charismatic teacher, or perhaps found his

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[34] In CDL the Niutou monk Longya Yuanchang 龍牙圓暢 (d.u.), who like Faqin was a disciple of Xuansu, is listed as a disciple of Mazu. See CDL 7.118. That seems to be a mistake, which might be due to the fact that as we already noted Xuansu was also known as Mazu.

[35] CDL 7.123, and SGSZ 11, T 50.773. See also Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, p. 373.

[36] CDL 7.119–20.

teachings to be more appealing.[37] It is also possible that as the fortunes of the Niutou School declined and those of the Hongzhou School rose, some monks who studied both with Mazu and with Niutou teachers thought it more advantageous to associate themselves with the Hongzhou School (or perhaps their status-conscious disciples made sure that they were perceived as such).

Nonetheless, there is another explanation why most monks who studied with both Mazu and with other Niutou teachers eventually came to be considered as Mazu's disciples. By the tenth century, when the most widely-used biographies of these monks were written, Mazu's lineage was accepted as the orthodox Chan lineage, while the Niutou School (which became defunct before the end of the Tang) was relegated to the status of a collateral lineage. Within that context, virtually all monks who studied with Mazu and other Niutou teachers were listed as disciples of Mazu in the normative texts belonging to the transmission of the lamp genre, even when the connection with Mazu was somewhat tenuous. The rigid genealogical format that was used by the authors of these texts did not allow for a monk to be listed as a disciple of more that one teacher. We need not blindly follow these later sources, and conclude that all of these monks rejected the earlier ties with their Niutou teachers and chose only to be considered as Mazu's disciples. It is quite possible that they considered themselves students of more than one teacher, without being at all concerned about their affiliation with either the Niutou or the Hongzhou lineage.

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[37] Yinshun 印順, *Zhongguo chanzong shi* 中國禪宗史, pp. 424–26. Yinshun also suggests that the above tendency was perhaps responsible for the eventual demise of the Niutou School.

## Relationship with Shitou

Besides the Niutou School, in the South there were also other groups of monks that gathered around teachers who, like Mazu, were disciples of Huineng's students. One of these groups of monks was the small community that gathered at Nanyue mountain around Shitou. Shitou's teacher Xingsi was, like Mazu's teacher Huairang, an obscure disciple of Huineng.[38] Although the later Chan tradition lifted Shitou's status to that of (together with Mazu) a progenitor of one of the two main Chan lineages and one of the greatest Chan teachers of the eighth century, during their lifetime Shitou was nowhere as famous or influential as Faqin or Mazu.[39]

Born in Gaoyao county 高要縣 in Guangdong province, Shitou was nine years Mazu's senior. According to his biography in *Zutang ji*, he met Huineng in 713, when he was only thirteen years old.[40] As Huineng soon died, Shitou must have spend only a short period with Huineng, if he did meet Huineng at all. Later Shitou studied with Xingsi, a little-known disciple of Huineng who resided at Qingyuan mountain in Jiangxi. After Xingsi's death in 740, Shitou moved to Nanyue, probably arriving there around 741. *Zutang ji* states that Shitou had already visited Nanyue on an earlier occasion, when Xingsi sent him there to deliver a letter to Huairang, but that story is of doubtful

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[38] For his biography see ZTJ 3.70 (where his name is listed as Rev. Jingju 靖居和尚), and CDL 5.90–91.

[39] For Shitou's biography, see SGSZ 9, T 50.736c, ZTJ 4.88–93, and CDL 14.258–59. For studies of his life, see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, pp. 123–46, and Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 396–411.

[40] ZTJ 4.89; CDL 14.258 contains the same information. His disciples and/or biographers could have invented the meeting with Huineng later in order to enhance Shitou's religious authority. At the same time, Shitou's native place was close to Caoxi, where Huineng was residing, and it is possible that Shitou went to see Huineng.

provenance.[41] After he moved to Nanyue, Shitou met with Huairang. The connection with Huairang apparently proved valuable to Shitou. Huairang was already established in the area, and he was quite helpful as Shitou was first settling in the mountain. Apparently, Huairang even arranged for a small temple to be built for Shitou.[42] As Shitou reached Nanyue around 741, which was probably shortly before Mazu's departure for Fojiyan, it is possible that the two met at that time. They might also have met during Shitou's earlier visit to Nanyue (if the information in *Zutang ji* is correct). Though a meeting between the two is an intriguing possibility, unfortunately there is no conclusive evidence to prove that such a meeting did (or did not) take place.

There are a number of stories in Mazu's later biographies that indicate Mazu was aware of Shitou's activities at Nanyue, and that he had a high opinion of Shitou's teaching abilities. Sources from the post-Tang period also state that at various times Mazu directed his disciples to go to see Shitou and ask him for religious instructions. The list of disciples that Mazu supposedly sent to visit Shitou, or recommended to study with him, includes Danxia, Daotong, Daowu, Lingmo 靈默, Zhaodi 招提, and Deng Yingfeng 鄧隱峰.[43] However, while these sources all indicate that Mazu encouraged his disciples to go to visit Shitou and learn from him, there are hardly any records of Shitou advising anyone to go to study with Mazu.[44] Does that mean that the strong admiration Mazu supposedly felt for Shitou was not reciprocated?

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[41] ZTJ 4.90.

[42] Ibid.

[43] For Danxia, Lingmo, and Zhaodi see ZTJ 4.96, ZTJ 15.333, and ZTJ 4.102, respectively; for Deng Yingfeng see CDL 6.105; and for Daotong and Daowu see SGSZ 10, T 50.777c, and T 50.769a–70a, respectively.

[44] Pang Yun might be an exception, but the sources are at odds about the sequence of his meetings with Mazu and Shitou. While his record of sayings and his biography in CDL 8.146 state that he went

The lack of information about Shitou's attitudes towards Mazu is perhaps not too surprising, considering that on the whole there is not much biographical information about Shitou. One of the main reasons for the paucity of reliable biographical information about him is the fact that during his lifetime Shitou was a little known teacher who led a reclusive life and had relatively few disciples. During the early ninth century Shitou's lineage for the most part remained an obscure provincial tradition, despite attempts on the part of some of Shitou's disciples to elevate their teachers stature and present him as Mazu's equal. These efforts, which included the commission of Shitou's stele inscription during the early 820s, did not yield immediate results, as can be seen from Zongmi's writings about Chan, which barely mention Shitou's lineage.[45] It is quite likely that many of the stories that contain Mazu's favorable comments about Shitou and his advice to his disciples to go and study with Shitou were created by monks associated with Shitou's lineage. As Mazu's lineage was far better known, Shitou's disciples were eager to elevate Shitou's status and present their teacher as Mazu's equal. To that effect they created stories which insinuated that Mazu himself considered Shitou to be his equal.

Most of Shitou's main disciples, such as Daowu, Danxia, and Yaoshan Weiyan 藥山惟儼 (745–828), also studied with Mazu. The fact that these monks studied with

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to see Shitou first, according to ZTJ, he first went to see Mazu together with Danxia. See Danxia's biography in ZTJ 4.95. Moreover, in Shitou's biography in ZTJ 4. 92, there is another story in which an anonymous monk from Mazu's community comes to visit. The monk returns to Mazu after seeing Shitou, but there is no indication that he was advised to do so by Shitou.

[45] The stele inscription, which is no longer extant, was composed during the 821–824 period by Liu Ke 劉軻. The famous passage which describes Mazu and Shitou as the main Chan teachers of their time first appeared in this stele inscription. The biography of Shitou in SGSZ quotes the passage from the stele inscription as follows: "Daji (i.e., Mazu) was the master in Jiangxi; Shitou was the master in Hunan. Those who were wavering and did not go to see these two great teachers were considered completely ignorant." SGSZ 9, T 50.764a; English translation from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 19.

different teachers, and were perhaps even encouraged by their teachers to do so, indicates a lack of sectarian ardor or obsession with lineage affiliation among Chan monks in the South during the early post-rebellion period. The lineage affiliation of a noted monk only became important in the increasingly sectarian atmosphere of the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods (but even then it did not approach anything close to the sectarianism that came to characterize Japanese Zen). By the mid-ninth century, especially in the aftermath of the Huichang era persecution of Buddhism, Shitou's lineage was becoming increasingly influential. That was mostly due to the successful proselytizing of the renowned Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良介 (807–869) and his disciples. From that time onwards, the lineage affiliation of the monks who studied with both Shitou and Mazu became a contested issue.

Among the monks who studied with both Mazu and Shitou, perhaps the best-known teacher during the early ninth century was Yaoshan. There is no indication that Yaoshan himself felt compelled to affiliate himself with either Mazu's or Shitou's lineage, or that he felt a need to choose one of them as his main teacher. Nonetheless, later Chan texts present contrasting versions of Yaoshan's relationship with Mazu and Shitou, which reflect the sectarian predilections of the authors of these texts, or of the authors of the sources used by them. For the most part, the later (i.e., post-Tang) Chan tradition regarded Yaoshan, together with Daowu, as one of Shitou's two main disciples. Consequently, Chan texts composed from the late tenth century onwards—such as *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *Chuandeng lu*, and *Zutang ji*—list Yaoshan as a disciple of Shitou. However, the text of his stele inscription (which is of questionable authenticity) states that he was disciple of Mazu, and does not mention Shitou at all.[46]

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[46] QTW 536.5443b–45a.

There is similar confusion about the identity of Daowu's "main teacher." *Song gaoseng zhuan* states that he first studied with Jingshan, and that he subsequently became a disciple of both Mazu and Shitou.[47] Early records—such as Mazu's and Huairang's stele inscriptions, and Zongmi's texts—list Daowu as a disciple of Mazu. However, in most later texts, beginning with *Zutang ji* and *Chuandeng lu*, he is listed as a disciple of Shitou. The whole issue of who Daowu's main spiritual teacher was became more important, and more complicated, during the post-Tang period, when various Chan lineages were forming their distinct proto-sectarian identity. By the early Song this process led to creation of the so-called five schools of classical Chan. Among these five, the last two schools to be formed—the Yunmen and Fayan Schools—traced their lineage back to Daowu. At that time the issue of Daowu's spiritual ancestry and the nature of his relationships with Mazu and Shitou became a point of contention between the various Chan lineages, all of whom traced their origins to either Mazu or Shitou. The compilers of *Zutang ji* and *Chuandeng lu* (who were members of the Fayan lineage) classified Daowu as a successor of Shitou in their genealogies of the Chan School. On the other hand, some early Song Linji monks rejected this genealogy and argued that Daowu was Mazu's disciple. Basing themselves on the evidence provided by a stele inscription written for Daowu of Tianwang monastery (which is now regarded to be a forgery), they contended that during the mid-Tang period there were two monks called Daowu, among whom the one who was the ancestor of Yunmen and Fayan was a disciple of Mazu, while the other one was a disciple of Shitou.

During the eighth century the question of whose disciple Daowu was—Mazu's, Shitou's, or Jingshan's—was probably not an issue of overwhelming importance. At the

[47] SGSZ 10, T 50.769a-b.

time the whole subject of inheriting (*si* 嗣) the dharma was still not narrowly framed in the ideological context of a fixation on the dharma inheritance from a single master to a single disciple that defined the later Chan tradition.[48] Monks like Yaoshan and Daowu studied with various Chan teachers, who were on friendly terms with each other. There is no indication that they felt a strong urge to create for themselves a religious identity that was primarily defined in terms of membership in a particular Chan lineage. The importance of the teacher-disciple relationship was clearly acknowledged during the mid-Tang period, as we can see from extant epigraphic evidence. Nonetheless, it is better to view the problem of rigid fixation on the construction of definitive dharma lineages as a later phenomenon. By the tenth century the delineation of lineages of orthodox transmission was a hotly contested issue in Chan sectarian debates, which led to the retroactive attribution of this set of concerns to the mid-Tang Chan tradition in the South.

During Mazu's lifetime the sectarian issue of dharma lineage was of course not entirely absent from Chan discourse. Some texts compiled during this period—such as *Lengqie shizi ji* and *Lidai fabao ji*—show concern for establishing the spiritual ancestry of noted Chan teachers with whom the authors of such texts were closely related. At the same time, among eighth century Chan monks, sectarian zealots of Shenhui's type were probably exceptions rather than the rule. Though the later stories that contain descriptions of Mazu's interactions with other Chan teachers (especially those that refer to Shitou) include fictional dialogues, they were based on popular lore that transmitted recollections about patterns of friendly interactions that most likely did really occur. Evidently Mazu was on friendly terms with other Chan teachers active in the South, and his disciples felt free, or were perhaps even encouraged, to go to visit other teachers and learn from them.

[48] See Yinshun, *Zhongguo chanzong shi*, p. 419.

## The Rise and Fall of Chan Patriarchs

During his long teaching career, which lasted over forty years, Mazu attracted a large number of monastic and lay disciples to his religious community. Many monks already joined his congregation at Gonggong mountain, and during his stay there he already became known as a popular Chan teacher. Nonetheless, it was after his move to Hongzhou, towards the end of his life, that Mazu emerged as the main Chan teacher in the South and his monastery became an important center of the so-called "Southern School" of Chan. Nonetheless, despite his great success as a Chan teacher, at the moment of his death Mazu's status as a pivotal figure in the history of the Chan tradition was still not completely assured. After all, early Chan history is filled with monks who during their heyday enjoyed great popularity and commanded large monastic and lay followings, only to sink eventually into near-oblivion and cede the place of preeminence to some of their less illustrious contemporaries. Much of recent Chan scholarship has consisted of efforts to resurrect the historical persona of such monks, and to reevaluate critically their position in the historical evolution of Chan.

Probably the best example of such a monk is Shenxiu, the leader of the so-called "Northern School" of Chan. Despite his highly successful career and the great influence he exerted during lifetime, Shenxiu was supplanted as the main representative of Chan of his generation by the relatively obscure Huineng.[49] It was the provincial and little known

[49] Shenxiu's monastic career and his impact on the development of early Chan are discussed in Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism*, pp. 13–36, and John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, pp. 44–56.

Huineng, rather the successful and well connected Shenxiu who, in the eyes of both Chan historians and adherents, came to be virtually unanimously regarded as the putative sixth patriarch of Chan. A similar fate awaited Shenxiu's highly successful and prominent disciples, among whom the most influential were Yifu 義福 (658–736) and Puji 普寂 (651–739). While their teacher was at least remembered as a major protagonist (albeit a caricatured and not entirely positive one) in the popular fictional story about his presumed rivalry with Huineng during their stay at Hongren's monastery, the momentous careers of both Yifu and Puji became barely more than mere footnotes in Chan history until the rediscovery of long-lost early Chan texts from Dunhuang during the early part of the twentieth century helped to reevaluate their standing in the history of early Chan.

In an interesting case of historical irony, in their near-oblivion from Chan tradition's communal historical consciousness the leaders of the Northern School were also joined by the zealous Heze Shenhui, whose acrimonious and self-serving campaign against Shenxiu and his disciples was a consequential (even if sometimes overestimated) factor in the eventual demise of the Northern School.[50] As is well known, Shenhui's duplicitous ploy to establish himself as the seventh Chan patriarch by championing the cause of his teacher Huineng as the rightful transmitter of Chan orthodoxy met with only limited and short-lived success. By the early ninth century, Shenhui was for the most part supplanted by Mazu as the main leader of the Southern School.[51] During the early Song

[50] For Shenhui's campaign against the Northern School, see McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," pp. 234–35.

[51] See the Introduction.

period, Shenhui's role in the shaping of mid-Tang Chan's ideological agenda was for the most part a forgotten chapter of the Chan School's history, despite Zongmi's efforts to refurbish Shenxiu's tarnished image and to reestablish Shenhui's lineage as the orthodox school of Chan.

The historical status of all of the influential Chan teachers mentioned above was closely linked to the fortunes of their disciples, and to the success of the later Chan lineages that traced their origin back to them. Although during their lifetime some Chan monks became famous because of their religious charisma and the popularity of their teachings, the subsequent staying power of their prominent position as principal leaders of the Chan tradition was to a large degree dependent on the continuous existence of the spiritual lineage(s) that originated with them (or at least retroactively claimed to do so). Influential monks whose lineages died out, such as Shenxiu and Shenhui, were relegated to relatively unimportant positions in the early Song Chan chronicles' accounts of the "historical" development of early Chan. These influential texts, the main representative of which was *Chuandeng lu*, presented a pseudo-historical image of Chan orthodoxy that reflected the beliefs and ideological orientations of the Chan tradition at the time when they were created. As such, they tended to downplay the role of earlier Chan teachers who were not directly related to any of the early Song Chan lineages, even though they were ecumenical enough to include their hagiographies. Conversely, a relatively obscure monk like Huineng became arguably the greatest Chan patriarch precisely because all later Chan lineages based their claim of orthodoxy and religious legitimacy on their link to him. Thus, Bodhidharma and Huineng, and to a slightly smaller degree Mazu, came to be

ubiquitously perceived as pivotal figures in the history of Chan because the later traditions of Chan traced their religious antecedents to these monks.

As was noted in the Introduction, Bodhidharma was a semi-legendary figure with tenuous historical connections to the early Chan movement, while Huineng remained a marginal figure until well after his death. In contrast to them, Mazu was a very successful and influential monk who rose to great prominence during his lifetime. Still, the Chan tradition's high assessment of Mazu's importance was not only a direct result of his charismatic teaching, or of his leadership position and influence in the religious milieu of late eight-century China. His subsequent eminent position among the great Chan patriarchs was also due to the fact that his disciples were highly successful in rapidly spreading his teachings throughout most of China, and forming the main lineages that came to dominate the Chan School from the early ninth century onwards. For later Chan tradition's historical judgment of Mazu's importance, in addition to Mazu's own accomplishments, it was also important that his spiritual descendants' lineages showed remarkable resilience, and continued to be greatly influential long after Mazu's death, with some of them surviving (albeit in somewhat different form and condition) down to the present day.

The first of these lineages to eventually come to be perceived as a distinct school of Chan was the Guiyang School 潙仰宗, whose putative "founders" Guishan Lingyou 潙山靈祐 (771–853) and his disciple Yangshan Huiji 仰山慧寂 (807–833) were Mazu's second and third generation disciples, respectively.[52] The Guiyang School was

[52] Guishan will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

among the most influential Chan groups—quite possibly the most dominant— during the mid- and late ninth century. However, as the Guiyang School did not continue to flourish after the fall of the Tang dynasty, its impact on the consolidation and further perpetuation of Mazu's and Hongzhou School's historical standing was eventually supplanted by the Linji School, whose "founder" Linji was recognized as Mazu's third generation disciple. After a slow start during the late Tang, the Linji School, which traced its lineage to Mazu via Baizhang and Huangbo, emerged as the main Chan group during the Northern Song. That was the period when the influential transmission of the lamp chronicles finally construed the orthodox version of Chan history that continued to be accepted until the modern era.

It was to a large extent because of the subsequent thriving of the religious communities established by Mazu's disciples that the continuation of the legacy of their remarkable teacher was ensured. Mazu probably came to be widely perceived as the main figure in the Chan tradition during the post-rebellion as much due to the success of his disciples as due to his own achievements. The two were actually inseparable, since Mazu's main achievement, in terms of the development of Chan, was the training of a whole generation of influential Chan teachers, whose subsequent success in turn reinforced his own stature as a seminal figure in the history of Chan.

Seen in this light, it could be said that Mazu's greatest achievement, at least as far as his position in the history of the Chan School is concerned, was his remarkable success as a teacher. It was above all his ability to train numerous talented disciples—many of whom subsequently became important Chan leaders who made his religious teachings known throughout virtually the whole Tang empire—that firmly established his prominence as one Chan School's greatest leaders. It is to the subject of Hongzhou

School's expansion throughout the Tang empire, which within few decades was accomplished by Mazu's numerous disciples, that I now turn.

Chapter 5

# *Establishment of the Hongzhou School in the South*

With this chapter I begin my study of the Hongzhou School's historical development following the death of Mazu. From this point onward, I will shift my focus away from Mazu, whose life was the subject of the last two chapters, and turn my attention to his immediate disciples, who constituted Hongzhou's second generation. In this chapter I will concentrate on those disciples who were active in the South, which from the late eight century onwards become both the Hongzhou School's and the whole Chan movement's main geographical center of activity. I will begin with an overview of Mazu's disciples' backgrounds. That will be followed by brief sketches of the lives of Xitang and Baizhang, Mazu's two leading disciples. Subsequently, in section three I will introduce the other noted disciples who were active in Jiangxi, while in section four I will do the same for those disciples who took up residence in the other southern provinces. The present chapter is closely connected with the next chapter, which will simply continue the exploration of Hongzhou School's expansion begun here by focusing on those disciples who were active in the North, including Changan and Loyang, the two Tang capitals.

## Overview of Mazu's Disciples

Mazu is recognized as the teacher with the largest number of disciples in the whole history of Chan Buddhism. Though various Chan texts give different accounts of the number of his closest disciples, even according to most conservative assessments their

number was much larger than that of the disciples of any other Chan teacher who preceded or came after him. The earliest source that provides information about Mazu's disciples is his stele inscription, which lists the names of some of his senior disciples. The inscription names eleven monks who at the time of his death were considered to be his most prominent disciples, but it also makes it clear that it is not a comprehensive listing of all of his noted disciples. It says:

> [Dazhu] Huihai 慧海, [Xitang] Zhizang [西堂]智藏, Gaoying 鎬英, [Ganquan] Zhixian [甘泉]志賢, Zhitong 智通, [Tianhuang] Daowu [天皇]道悟, [Zhangjing] Huaihui [章敬]懷暉, [Xingshan] Weikuan [興善]惟寬, Zhiguang 智廣, Chongtai 崇泰, Huiyun 惠雲, and others, dedicated their bodies to his (i.e. Mazu's) service and their minds penetrated his teaching. They considered our teacher's true nature to be calm, united with empty space, and that only his body would be transformed into relics.[1]

Later sources provide more exact figures about the number of Mazu's close disciples.[2] *Zutang ji* gives the number of his close disciples as eighty-eight, while *Baizhang yulu* and

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[1] QTW 501.2262a. Among the eleven monks listed above, we know virtually nothing about five of them: Gaoying, Chongtai, Zhitong, Zhiguang, and Huiyun. The names of the first three are only listed at the beginning of fascicle six of CDL (p. 104), while the names of the last two appear nowhere else besides the stele inscription. It seems probable that these monks were mentioned in the inscription because of their seniority and/or because they were in some capacity involved in the building of the memorial stupa and the commissioning of the inscription at Shimen. It is also plausible that at least some of the names are misprints for the names of some of Mazu's leading disciples who are not included in the list. For example, Zhitong could be a misprint for either Daotong 道通 or Zhichang 智常. The list itself was probably modeled on similar lists of ten great disciples that appear in the records of Hongren and Huineng, while these earlier lists were probably based on the list of the ten great disciples of the Buddha that appeared in the early Buddhist scriptures. For the list of Hongren's main disciples, see Jingjue's *Lengqie shizi ji*, T 85.1285c; for Huineng's list see *Liuzu tanjing*, T 48.360a, and Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, p. 170.

[2] All of these listings of Mazu's close/noted disciples only include monks who distinguished themselves, either through their teaching activities or in some other way. The number of all monks who came to stay at Mazu's monasteries was certainly considerably larger, and only a relatively small number of those monks were significant enough to deserve mention in the historical records.

*Tiansheng guangdeng lu* state that he had eight-four disciples.[3] Furthermore, Mazu's biography in *Chuandeng lu* states that he had 139 close disciples, and the text also list the names of all but one of them. On the other hand, Nanquan's biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* states that Mazu had "over 800 disciples."[4] That might be a misprint for "over eighty," in which case it is more-or-less in accord with the first three sources given above. When we combine the information about Mazu's disciples available from all of these sources, we have the names of no less then 148 of them.[5]

Mazu's huge impact as an immensely successful teacher who trained the largest number of monks, many of whom became among the most influential Chan teachers of the time, becomes evident when we compare the space Chan histories allocate to the biographies of his disciples in comparison to the space allocated to the disciples of other noted Chan teachers. The biographies of Mazu's disciples alone take three fascicles of *Chuandeng lu*, the large Northern Song history of the Chan School, and comprise 10 percent of the whole text, or close to 13 percent of all biographies of Chinese monks included in the text.[6] As such, they occupy a vastly larger space than the biographies of

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[3] ZTJ 16.364 (Huangbo's biography), *Baizhang yulu*, XZJ 119.409d, and TGDL 8, XZJ 135.328c.

[4] SGSZ 11, T 50.775a, and CDL 6.106. The large discrepancy between the numbers of Mazu's disciples given in SGSZ and in other sources can be explained in two ways: either SGSZ refers to all the monks who studied at Mazu's monasteries (instead only to his close disciples, as other texts do), or, as stated above, the text might be mistaken and might need to be read as "over eighty" instead "over eight hundred."

[5] The name of all these disciples are listed in a table in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 526–30. The table also provides references for sources about each disciple included in it.

[6] Although the biographies of Mazu's direct disciples comprise three out of CDL's thirty fascicles (fascicles 6–8), if we exclude fascicles 1 and 2, which include the hagiographies of the putative Indian Chan patriarchs, and fascicles 27–30, which do not include any biographies of Chan monks, the biographies of Mazu's disciples constitute about 1/8 of all biographies. That is quite remarkable, when we consider that CDL was a text that covered all noted Chan teachers from the early sixth century until the beginning of the eleventh century. Furthermore, a little more than two out of ZTJ's twenty

the disciples of any other Chan teacher. For the sake of comparison, the disciples of all of Mazu's direct disciples (i.e. his second-generation disciples) taken together occupy only two fascicle of the same text (fascicles 9 and 10).

The difference becomes even more striking when we compare the space allocated to the disciples of Shitou, Mazu's contemporary, who together with Mazu is traditionally regarded as the main second-generation descendant of Huineng. The disciples of Shitou occupy less then half a fascicle of *Chuandeng lu* (the first half of fascicle 14), even though the text's compiler was recognized as a later generation member of Shitou's lineage. Moreover, half of the monks who are presented as Shitou's disciples were also disciples of Mazu, and they could instead easily have been listed among Mazu's disciples.[7] Mazu's disciples are also prominently represented in the section on Chan (meditation) practitioners (*xichan* 習禪) in *Song gaoseng zhuan* (with few disciples also appearing in other sections of the same text). In this historical work, Mazu comes into view as the most influential Chan teacher of the Tang period.[8]

Basic information about forty-three of Mazu's best-known disciples is provided in Appendix 3. There are a few points that become apparent when we examine the data

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fascicles are devoted to Mazu's disciples (fascicles 14–16), despite the apparent bias of its compilers in favor of Shitou's lineage, with which they identified themselves.

[7] Mazu was also a teacher of many monks for whom there are no records, as well as monks who were not associated with the Chan school. Examples of the fist kind are the five disciples listed in Mazu's stele inscription, who were not remembered by the later Chan tradition. An example of the second kind is Shenqin 神湊 (745–818), a Vinaya teacher whose biography in SGSZ 16, T 50.807a, records that he studied with Mazu during his early monastic years. Another disciple of Mazu who is not primarily associated with the Chan school was the *Huayan Scripture*'s exegete Wushan Zhizang 烏山智藏 (741–819), a monk of Indian ancestry whose study with Mazu is recorded in his biography in SGSZ 6, T 50.740c.

[8] SGSZ presents full biographies for thirty-two monks who were disciples of Mazu, and additional two disciples (Chaoan and Xitang) are accorded minor biographical entries.

contained in the table presented there. First of all, the diversity of Mazu's disciples' regional backgrounds is quite striking. Although, as one would expect, monks who were natives of the provinces where Mazu taught (Fujian and Jiangxi) and monks born in the adjacent provinces (especially Hunan and Zhejiang) are most numerous, there are also disciples who hailed from most other parts of China. It is also conspicuous that there was not a single noted disciple who hailed from Mazu's native Sichuan.[9] Furthermore, although a considerable number of disciples did settle in Hongzhou and the other prefectures in Jiangxi—which thus came to be widely perceived as the geographical center of the Hongzhou School, as its name indicates—a much larger number of Mazu's disciples left Jiangxi for other parts of China. Among them a rather surprisingly large number went far north. It is also noticeable that after finishing their study with Mazu, only a relatively few disciples returned to their native provinces.[10] That is especially noticeable among the disciples born in Fujian, among whom only Wuliao settled in a monastery located in his native province.

An even fuller picture of the regional spread of the Hongzhou School can be obtained when we consider the area of teaching activity for a larger sampling of Mazu's disciples than the ones introduced in Appendix 3. Table 1 below presents a province-by-province break-down of the regional spread of the Hongzhou School. The table gives the

[9] In CDL there is brief information about two obscure monks from Sichuan who studied with Mazu, Lecturer Liang of Xishan 西山亮座主 (d.u.) and Rev. Zechuan 則川和尙 (d.u.). See CDL 8.138–39, 141.

[10] Among the monks whose names are listed in the table in Appendix 3, and for whom we have information about both their birthplace and the location of their monastery, only five—Taiyu, Wuliao, Fazang, Xitang, and Huilang—returned to their native areas.

number of disciples recorded in *Chuandeng lu* who were active in each of the provinces where a disciple of Mazu established himself as a local Chan teacher.[11]

Table 1. Geographical spread of the Hongzhou School

| Province | No. of disciples | No. of biographies |
|---|---|---|
| Anhui 安徽 | 6 | 3 |
| Fujian 福建 | 4 | 2 |
| Guangdong 廣東 | 6 | 1 |
| Hebei 河北 | 5 | 5 |
| Henan 河南 | 4 | 2 |
| Hubei 湖北 | 11 | 3 |
| Hunan 湖南 | 13 | 10 |
| Jiangxi 江西 | 21 | 16 |
| Jiangsu 江蘇 | 7 | 1 |
| Shandong 山東 | 1 | 0 |
| Shanxi 山西 | 11 | 5 |
| Shaanxi 陕西 | 11 | 6 |
| Zhejiang 浙江 | 11 | 6 |
| subtotal | 111 | 60 |
| Unclear/other | 28 | 16 |
| Total | 139 | 76 |

[11] Table 1 is based on a part of larger table that appears in Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, p. 34. The second column gives the number of disciples who appear CDL and whose primary monastery was located in the province listed in column one. The third column list the number of those monks who among all monks listed in column two actually have biographical entries in fascicles 6, 7, or 8 of CDL (the other monks have only their name listed at the beginning of one these three fascicles). The information presented in the table is tentative, since there is little data about many of these monks, and in several cases the connection between some of them and Mazu is not well documented. Despite such caveats, the table does give a rough, but also quite revealing, outline of the regional spread of the Hongzhou school, even if the actual numbers of monks allocated to each province might not be exactly accurate.

From this table we can draw a few further conclusions that amplify the points I made above. First, most of Mazu's disciples were active in the South, with monks whose monastery was located in Jiangxi forming the largest single group, comprising roughly 19 percent of the total (twenty-one out of the 111 monks for whose monastery location we have data). That is hardly surprising, since Mazu taught in the South, and with the exception of the brief stay in Fujian at the beginning of his teaching career, the three monasteries where he trained his disciples were located in Jiangxi. It is also noticeable that even in this large sample of disciples there is not a single monk who moved to teach in Mazu's native Sichuan. That is probably in part due to the fact that none of Mazu's disciples originally came from the remote western province; it is also possible that for whatever reasons, at the time Sichuan was not perceived as being a particularly attractive place for proselytizing activities. Also striking is the large number of monks who moved to the North—no fewer then twenty-two of Mazu's disciples settled in Shaanxi and Shanxi—many of whom were active in the two capitals. Although not many disciples were active in the northeastern provinces, still the Hongzhou School also reached that part of China within a few decades of Mazu's death, as five of Mazu's disciples were active in Hebei, and one was active in Shandong.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of pertinent data we are not in a good position to make a broad assessment of the socioeconomic background of the families of Mazu's disciples. The biographical sources focus almost exclusively on those monks' activities that fit into predetermined patterns of religious behavior. It is only rarely that we are provided with clues about the social status of the families of individual monks. However, on the basis of a variety of explicit clues found in the early biographical sources, and on

conjectures based on the observation of such elements as patterns of activity, manners of expression, information about literacy and education attainments (both secular and monastic), networks of associations and patronage (all of which will be gradually introduced in the discussions of individual monks' lives that follow), I am inclined to postulate that for the most part the socioeconomic background of Mazu's disciples was similar to Mazu's background as discussed in Chapter Three. That means that many of Mazu's disciples seem to have come from local gentry families, and received at least a modicum of classical education during their childhood. Some of them, such as Wuxie and Danxia, spent their youth in intensive study and preparation for the state examinations that were an important step towards a career in the imperial bureaucracy.[12]

As a group, in the early sources the leading disciples about whom we have more information appear as monks who were quite at home in their dealings with noted officials and literati (including prime ministers and emperors), were conversant with Buddhist scriptures, doctrines, and practices, and were proficient at preaching to both educated monks and upper-class officials and literati.[13] That is congruous with my hypothesis about their local (and mostly southern) gentry background. Though some of the monks came from local branches of the most prestigious aristocratic families—e.g., Baizhang and Yanguan, whose background will be discussed below—most of them

[12] See Wuxie's biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.768c, and Danxia's biographies in CDL 14.262, and ZTJ 4.95.

[13] As noted in Chapter Nine, Japanese scholars often describe the Hongzhou school as an egalitarian tradition that brought the teachings of Buddhism—supposedly presented in a novel, completely Sinicized, and inherently superior fashion—to the Chinese masses. My examination of the extant sources indicates that such a portrayal of the Hongzhou school is patently inaccurate. It is quite apparent that the Chan school during the middle and late Tang periods perceived and presented itself as an elite contemplative tradition, and was also deemed to be so by its contemporaries.

probably originated from gentry families that only occupied positions of local prominence.[14]

## Xitang and Baizhang

***Xitang***. It is not entirely clear what exactly happened at Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou after Mazu's death in 788, but it is apparent that Xitang was recognized as the leader among Mazu's most senior disciples, and that he became the main representative of the monastic community in Hongzhou.[15] Xitang taught at Kaiyuan monastery at least a few years after Mazu's death, and Mazu's lay disciples looked up to him more than any other senior disciple as their teacher.[16] Despite Xitang's important role in the early history of

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[14] The noticeable exception was Shigong, who, as we will see, was a hunter before his entry into the monastic order under Mazu's tutelage. But the traditional account about his humble origins is not without problems. A poem that according to his biography in ZTJ 14.314–15 was composed by him indicates that he was not from an illiterate common stock. Indeed, the poem has the same title and similar literary form as a poem composed by the well-educated Danxia (see ZTJ 4.100–01), although the contents of the two poems are not the same.

[15] The earliest biographical source about Xitang's life is his stele inscription, *Gonggongshan Xitang chishi Dazhue chanshi chongjian dabaoguangda beiming* 龔公山西堂敕諡大覺禪師重建大寶光塔碑銘, copies of which can be found in *Ganzhou fuzhi* 贛州府志 16.14a–15a (published in 1873) and *Ganxian zhi* 贛縣志 50.3a–4b. The text has been reproduced in Ishii Shūdō, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," IBK 40/1 (1991), p. 281. Ishii also has a Japanese translation in his *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa* 中國禪宗史話, pp. 199–202. There was an earlier stele inscription that was composed by Li Bo 李渤 (773–831) soon after Xitang's death in 817, which was destroyed in 845 during the Huichang era persecution of Buddhism. The existence of the earlier inscription is confirmed both by the extant inscription and by Xitang's brief biography in SGSZ. Furthermore, Xitang's original memorial pagoda is still extant at the site of his monastery in the vicinity of Ganzhou 贛州. For a description of the site and discussion of the extant stone inscription from 820 that records the competition of the stupa, which was rediscovered in 1987, see Suzuki Tetsuo, *Chūgoku zenshūshi ronkō* 中國禪宗史論考, pp. 155-65. In addition to the inscription, biographical information about Xitang can also be found in CDL 7.119–20, SGSZ 10, T 50.766c (where he is not accorded a full biography, but only a brief entry attached at the end of Mazu's biography), and ZTJ 15.327.

[16] Mazu had another two disciples whose name was also Zhizang. First, there was the already mentioned Wushan Jizang, a scholarly monk of Indian ancestry who wrote a commentary on the *Huayan* scripture, whose study with Mazu is recorded in his biography in SGSZ 6, T 50.740c. The

the Hongzhou School, later Chan sources provide little information about him.[17] All of Xitang's biographies in major Chan chronicles, such as *Chuandeng lu* and *Zutang ji*, are rather brief. That reflects the fact that the demotion of his stature within the Chan tradition was already evident at the time when these texts were compiled. Nonetheless, his historical position as Mazu's leading disciple was too strongly established to be ignored by the compilers of such later chronicles, and thus in these texts Xitang is usually introduced, together with Baizhang, as one of Mazu's two main disciples.[18] At the same time, the same texts provide little information about Xitang's life and his role in the formation of the Hongzhou School. The text of his stele inscription was apparently not widely circulated, and was not preserved in any of the standard collections that include epigraphic materials from the Tang period. Furthermore, his biographies are very brief, and with the exception of few short stories of questionable provenance, we have no record of his teachings.[19] The paucity of data about Xitang's life and teaching reflect the fact that he was subsequently supplanted by other monks as the leading representative of Hongzhou School's second generation.

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other monk was Huayan Zhizang, who taught at Huayan monastery in the capital (see his biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.775c). See also Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 348, n. 10.

[17] According to Yanagida, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu: jo no ichi," ZK 59 (1978), p. 26, after Mazu's death Xitang emerged as the real representative of Mazu's disciples.

[18] In later Chan texts, Nanquan is also added to Xitang and Baizhang, and the three monks are presented as Mazu's greatest disciples. For Nanquan, see Chapter Six.

[19] The lack of biographical information about Xitang at the time when the standard Chan histories started to be compiled, namely during the tenth century, is clearly evident in the ZTJ. There, towards the end of his brief hagiographic entry, which contains virtually no biographical information, the compilers note that: "Besides these [three short stories], we have not seen any other records about his activities, and the dates of his death and birth are not know." ZTJ 15.327. Moreover, although the author of SGSZ allocated separate biographies to over twenty of Mazu's disciples, as noted above, he did not allocate a full biographical entry to Xitang. The reasoning behind Zanning's decision not to

Nonetheless, the earliest sources about Mazu's communities at Gongong mountain and in Hongzhou clearly attest to Xitang's leading role among Mazu's disciples. It seems that Mazu perceived Xitang as one of his principal disciples as early as the late 760s, as can be seen from Mazu's decision to bestow upon Xitang the abbacy at Gongongshan at the time of his move to Hongzhou.[20] Xitang is also listed second among the senior disciples whose names appear in the section of Mazu's stele inscription quoted above. Xitang is listed after Dazhu, but it is most probable that Dazhu was listed first, even though he was not influential in the Buddhist community in Hongzhou, only because he was Mazu's most senior disciple, having joined Mazu during the early days of his teaching in Fujian.

Further indication of Xitang's high standing can be deduced from an inscription for a monastery in Mazu's native Sichuan that was composed by the famous poet Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812–858). The inscription commemorates Mazu, Xitang, Wuxiang, and Wuzhu. Xitang was ostensibly included in such an illustrious company as the main representative of Mazu's disciples, despite the fact that he is the only one among the four monks who had no direct connection with Sichuan.[21] Furthermore, in his preface to *Chuanxin fayao*, Pei Xiu states that Huangbo was a "Dharma nephew" of Baizhang and Xitang.[22] Pei's mention of Xitang, who had no direct connection with Huangbo, indicates that the old judgment of the importance of Xitang as the leader of the Hongzhou School

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accord a full biography to Xitang is not clear, but it is possible that he simply did not have enough information about Xitang's life.

[20] See Chapter Three.

[21] See *Tang Zizhou huiyijingshe nanchanyuan sizhengtang beiming* 唐梓州慧義精舍南禪院四證堂碑銘, QTW 780.3608b–09c.

[22] T 48.379b.

following Mazu's death was still accepted around 850, when Pei wrote the preface. Xitang is also among the five main disciples of Mazu (together with Huaihui, Baizhang, Weikuan, and Daowu) who are mentioned in Zongmi's *Pei Xiu sheyiwen* 裴休拾遺文.[23]

As is to be expected, Xitang's stele inscription presents him as Mazu's most influential and capable disciple. The inscription also couples Xitang and Weikuan as the two main disciples whose teachings flourished in the South and the North, respectively.[24] This statement obviously evokes comparison with the well-known representation of Shenxiu as the Chan's leader in the North and Huineng in the South. The comparison thus insinuates that Xitang was the main representative of the Chan School in the South, which probably was tantamount to saying that he was Mazu's main disciple, considering the implicit notion that the Southern branch of Chan was superior to the Northern. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography also states that Xitang received Mazu's robe. As from the mid-Tang period onwards the transmission of the robe from a Chan teacher to his disciple was used as a metaphor for the transmission of Chan enlightenment, Mazu's putative bestowal of his robe upon Xitang indicated his selection of Xitang as his main spiritual successor (even though probably that was not something with which Mazu was concerned).[25]

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[23] See also discussion in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 464, and Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 284.

[24] Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 281.

[25] SGSZ 10, T 50.766c. The use of the bestowal of a robe as a symbol of the orthodox transmission of the dharma comes from the apocryphal story of the transmission of Chan from Hongren to Huineng. This story was probably invented by Shenhui as part of his self-serving campaign to establish Huineng as the sixth patriarch of Chan. For a popular version of this legend, see the Dunhuang version of the *Liuzu tanjing*, T 48.338a. For Shehui's argument about the transmission of the robe to Huineng, see Yang Zengwen, ed., *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu*, pp. 27, 202–03, and Tanaka Ryōshō, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, pp. 485–90.

Xitang was born in 738 in Qianhua 虔化 prefecture (in present-day Jiangxi).[26] His family name was Liao 廖. When he entered a monastery, he was only eight years old. In 750, when he was still only twelve, Xitang joined Mazu, who at the time was residing at Xili mountain 西裏山 in Fuzhou 撫州 (also in present-day Jiangxi), located not very far from Xitang's native place.[27] The young Xitang became Mazu's disciple, and followed Mazu when the later moved to Gonggong mountain in Qian 虔, located in Xitang's native prefecture.[28] In 751, at the age of twenty-three, he received full monastic ordination.[29] According to *Chuandeng lu*, during his study with Mazu at Gonggong mountain, Xiang was sent as Mazu's emissary to visit such important Chan teachers as Jingshan Faqin and Huizhong—both of whom were leaders of the Niutou School of Chan—and to deliver to

[26] The year of his birth given here is based on his stele inscription. The SGSZ biography, however, states that he died in 814, in which case his dates would be 735–814 rather than 738–817. For a discussion of Xiatang's dates see Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 282, and Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 175–81. The evidence about which set of dates is correct is not conclusive (Ishii is inclined to follow the inscription, while Suzuki favors the SGSZ biography). Here I follow the stele inscription because it is an earlier, and presumably more reliable, source (even though it is preserved only in quite late texts).

[27] Following the stele inscription. See the original text in Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 281. According to the CDL 7.119, however, Xitang joined Mazu at Fojiyan (Fujian). As was already noted in chapter 3, that is highly improbable considering his age at the time, and the distance between his native place and Fojiyan. This information about the place of Xitang's first meeting with Mazu might be just a result of a plain mistake, but it is also possible that it was created as part of a conscious effort to present Xitang as member of the first group of disciples who joined Mazu at Fojiyan.

[28] SGSZ 10, T 50.766c.

[29] The year of his ordination is the same according to both the steles inscription and the SGSZ biography, even though the two text are disagreement over the date of his death. The two texts give different number of years for the time from Xitang's ordination until his death, but the end result is that they are in agreement about the year of his ordination. For a convenient summary of the differences between the dates for various major events in Xitang's life that appear in these two sources, see Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 176–77.

them Mazu's correspondence.[30] When around 770 Mazu was invited to the prefectural capital of Hongzhou, Mazu designated Xitang to lead the community at Gonggong mountain.[31]

During the later part of his life, Xitang emerged as a successful teacher and a well-connected monk. According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, his lay disciples included powerful local officials such as Li Jian 李兼 (d.u.), Pei Tong 裴通 (d.u.), and Ji Ying 齊映 (748–795). As I already discussed in Chapter Three, Li became Mazu's disciple and supporter after he received the position of governor of Jiangxi in 785. Li was also involved, together with Xitang, in the organization of Mazu's funeral. After Mazu's death, he remained a supporter of the monastic community in Hongzhou, and continued his study of Buddhism with Xitang. It is not clear who Pei Tong was. He might have been a member of the Pei clan and a relative to Pei Xu, the official who became Mazu's disciple during his stay at Gonggong mountain. With regard to Ji Ying, after passing the *jinshi* examination and serving in a variety of government posts, he followed Li Jian as a civil governor of Jiangxi after 791.[32] The fact that Ji Ying became Xitang's supporter indicates that in 791 Xitang was still at Kaiyuan monastery.

Another official who was probably in some way connected with Xitang was Li Bo 李渤 (773–831), the author of his first stele inscription.[33] Li was a great supporter of Buddhism. He was also associated with other Chan monks, including Mazu's disciple

[30] See CDL 7.119–20. SGSZ 10, T 50.766c, also mentions that Mazu sent Xitang to visit Faqin, as do Faqin's biographies in ZTJ 3.65 and CDL 4.67. Mazu's relationship with these monks was discussed in Chapter Four.

[31] For the circumstances surrounding Mazu's move to Hongzhou, see Chapter Three.

[32] See Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 177. For Ji's biography, see JTS 136.3750–51.

[33] Biographies in JTS 171.4437–42, and XTS 118.4281–86.

Guizong. It is possible, however, that Li did not meet with Xitang, but that he first visited his monastery when he wrote the inscription in 821, during the brief period when he was stationed as a district magistrate (*cishi* 刺史) of Qianzhou, the area where Xitang's monastery was located.[34] Xitang's biography in *Chuandeng lu* also records a conversation between him and the famous Confucian apologist Li Ao 李翱.[35] It is conceivable that the two met, but as the story about their conversation is of uncertain origin, there is some doubt as to whether the alleged meeting actually took place.[36]

The last two decades of Xitang's life are not well documented. He seems to have been in Hongzhou around the time of Mazu's death in 788, and to have stayed at Kaiyuan monastery during the remainder of Li Jian's tenure as a civil governor, as well as during at least a part of Ji Ying's term of office in the same position. It appears that the final decade of Xitang's life was spent back at his monastery on Gonggong mountain. Although the sources do not explicitly state where he died, since his stupa was erected at the grounds of the monastery on Gonggong mountain, it seems safe to assume that he died there in 817, at the age of seventy-nine. According to his stele inscription, at the time

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[34] Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 179.

[35] There is the following story about one of Li Ao's conversations with Xitang:

> Secretary of State Li Ao once asked a monk, "What was the teaching of the Great Master Ma?" The monk replied, "The Great Master sometimes would say that mind is Buddha; sometimes he would say that it is neither mind nor Buddha." Li said, "All pass here." Li then asked the Master, "What was the teaching of the Great Master Ma?" The Master called, "Li Ao!" Li responded. The Master said, "The drum and the horn moved."

CDL 7.120, translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 98. For more information about Li Ao's relationship with Buddhism, see Timothy Hugh Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, or Neo-Confucian?*

[36] In addition to Xitang, there are records about Li Ao's meeting with three other disciples of Mazu: Yaoshan, Dayi, and Daotong. For more details, see Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定, *Shina ni okeru Bukkyō*

of his death Xitang did not suffer from any illness, but simply asked his disciples to assemble, and then took his leave of them. In 824, emperor Muzong 穆宗 (r. 820–824) posthumously bestowed on him the title Dajue 大覺 (Great Awakening), and his memorial pagoda was named Dabaoguang 大寶光 (Great Precious Light).[37] According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, the posthumous title was bestowed at the request of Li Bo.[38] The same text also notes that Wei Shou 韋綬 compiled a record of Xitang's teachings and acts, which is no longer extant.[39]

***Korean disciples***. One of the reasons why the later Chan tradition for the most part overlooked Xitang's important role in the history of the Hongzhou School was because he did not have any outstanding disciples who left notable impact on the subsequent history of Buddhism in China. Chan teachers who came to be held in the highest esteem by the later tradition to a large degree owed their subsequent fame to the success of their own disciples. *Chuandeng lu* includes a brief biography of only one disciple of Xitang, a little-known monk called Qianzhou Chuwei (d.u.) 虔州處微.[40] Nonetheless, while none of Xitang's Chinese disciples became prominent Chan teachers,

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*to Jukyō Dōkyo* 支那における佛教と儒教道教, p. 128, and Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 54–55.

[37] See the text of the inscription in Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 281. The CDL biography (p. 120) states that Dajue was his second title, and that he first received the title Daxuan 大宣. As Ishii points out, that is probably a mistake that is due to a mixture of the names of the titles and pagodas of Xitang and Huaihui, which is also evident in the ZTJ biography. Ibid., pp. 282–83.

[38] SGSZ 10, T 50.766c.

[39] For Wei's official biographies, see JTS 162.4244–45, and XTS 160.4976–77.

[40] CDL 9.159. In addition, ZTJ 17.373 also records two of his dialogues, one with Yangshan, and another with an anonymous monk.

he was a teacher of three Korean monks who exerted a strong influence on the development of the Chan (Sŏn) tradition on the Korean peninsula.

According to traditional accounts, the first monk to bring Chan to Korea was Pŏmnang 法朗(fl. 632–646), a putative disciple of the fourth Chan patriarch Daoxin. However, the main transmission of Chan to the Korean peninsula took place during the ninth century, and coincided with the Hongzhou School's rise to dominance.[41] During this time, Korean monks who studied with Chinese teachers founded eight mountain school of Sŏn. Together the earlier school that traced its lineage to Pŏmnang, by the early Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (937–1392) they came to be known as the "nine mountain schools of Sŏn" (*kusan sŏnmun* 九山禪門), and were widely perceived as representative of Chan/Sŏn during the Unified Silla 新羅 dynasty (669–936). All but one of the later eight schools were founded by Silla monks who were students of Mazu's disciples. Moreover, even the earliest Sŏn school, the Hŭiyang-san School whose origin supposedly went back to Pŏmnang, eventually came to present its lineage as going back to Mazu.[42]

Among the reputed founders of these main Silla Sŏn schools, three—Toŭi 道義 (d. 825), Hongch'ŏk 洪陟 (fl. 826), Hyech'ŏl 慧徹 (785–861)—were disciples of

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[41] Robert Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen: The Collected Works of Chinul*, p. 9, and *The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea*: The Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, *A Buddhist Apocriphon*, pp. 166–68.

[42] See Chŏsen sōtokufu 朝鮮總督府, ed., *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 朝鮮金石總覽, pp. 90–91, and Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 47.

Xitang.[43] The Korean monks were probably eager to study with Xitang because at the time he was Mazu's best-known disciple, because of which he attracted the largest number of Korean disciples among Mazu's disciples.

Table 2 below introduces the three Korean disciples of Xitang, together with the rest of the Korean monks who were "founders" of one of the mountain school of Silla Sŏn and were Mazu's second-generation disciples.[44]

[43] The first of these monks to come to study with Xitang was Toŭi. According to his biography in ZTJ, he met Xitang while the later was residing at Kaiyuan monastery. This meeting probably happened soon after his arrival in China in 784. After his study with Xitang, Tŏui also visited Baizhang's monastery. ZTJ 17.374. For a brief record of his teaching see *Sŏnmun pojang nok* 禪門寶藏錄, XZJ 113.499a-b, translated in Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 12–13. For Hyech'ŏl's memorial inscription, which was composed in 872, see *Chŏsen kinseki sōran*, vol. 1, pp. 116–19. He and Honch'ŏk are also briefly mentioned in ZTJ 17.374, while the same fascicle has a somewhat longer biography of Toŭi (ZTJ 17.373–74). All three monks are also listed as Xitang's disciples at the beginning of fascicle 9 of CDL, with the note that they are not accorded biographies because the compiler did not have any materials about them. CDL 9.148. Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 47, mistakenly identifies these monks as disciples of Mazu.

[44] The table is based on tables that appear in Chŏng Sŏng-bon 鄭性本, *Silla sŏnjong ŭi yŏn'gu* 新羅禪宗의研究, pp. 51–52, and Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 10–11. In the last column, CKS is an abbreviation for *Chōsen kinseki sōran*. Although in the table I have given the dates of these monks' study in China on the basis of the above two works, some of the dates seem to be wrong. For example, Toyun could not have studied with Nanquan during the 825–847 period because Nanquan died in 834, thirteen years before Toyun's supposed departure from China. Correspondingly, since Xitang died in 817, if Hyech'ŏl did arrive in China in 814, he must have studied with Xitang only during the last three years of Xitang's life.

Table 2. Korean monks who studied with Mazu's disciples

| Name | Dates | Teacher | Study in China | Monastery Location | Biographical Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hongch'ŏk 洪陟 | d.u. | Xitang | 809–826? | Silsang-san 實相山 | CKS 1, p. 90 |
| Hyech'ŏl 慧徹 | 785–861 | Xitang | 814–839 | Tongni-san 棟裡山 | CKS 1, pp. 116–19 |
| Hyŏnuk 玄昱 | 787–868 | Huaihui | 824–837 | Pongnim-san 鳳林山 | ZTJ 17 |
| Muyŏm 無染 | 799–888 | Magu | 821–845 | Sŏngju-san 聖住山 | CKS 1, pp. 72–83, ZTJ 17 |
| Pŏmil 梵日 | 810–889 | Yanguan | 831–846 | Sagul-san 闍崛山 | ZTJ 17, *Samguk yusa* 3 |
| Toŭi 道義 | d. 825 | Xitang | 784–821 | Kajisan 迦智山 | CKS 1, pp. 62–63, ZTJ 17 |
| Toyun 道允 | 797–868 | Nanquan | 825–847 | Saja-san 獅 子山 | ZTJ 17 |

In addition to the Korean students of Xitang, Huaihai, Magu, Yanguan, and Nanquan, who are listed above, in *Chuandeng lu* there are also records of Korean monks who studied with Damei and Guizong.[45] Not only does the fact that Xitang was the teacher of the largest number of early ninth century Korean monks indicate his preeminent position among Mazu's disciples, but the fact that most Korean monks during this period went to study under Mazu's disciples indicates that at the time the Hongzhou School was widely perceived as the main tradition of Chan.

[45] For the names of all Korean monks mentioned in CDL who were students of Mazu's first through third generation disciples, see the chart in Han Kidu 韓基斗, "Keitoku Dentōroku ni miru Shiragi zen" 景德傳燈錄に見る新羅禪, ZBKK 13 (1984), p. 131.

***Baizhang***. Even though after Mazu's death Xitang was recognized as a leader among Mazu's senior disciples, the monk who came to be traditionally regarded as the main representative of Hongzhou School's second generation was his junior confrere Baizhang.[46] The repositioning of Baizhang's image from that of one among Mazu's many noted disciples into his subsequent role as one of the greatest Chan teachers from the Tang period was a gradual process that lasted well beyond Baizhang's death.

Baizhang's relative lack of prominence among the monks at Kaiyuan monastery during Mazu's final years is indicated by the fact that his name is not included in the list of main disciples presented in Mazu's stele inscription. That omission implies that at the time of Mazu's death Baizhang was not recognized as a member of the restricted circle of principal disciples. Zhen Xu 陣詡, the author of Baizhang's stupa inscription, was clearly aware of the omission of Baizhang's name from the list in Mazu's stele inscription. He offered the following somewhat unconvincing explanation for Baizhang's exclusion:

> [Baizhang's] words were succinct and his reasoning was perspicacious. His appearance was affable, and his spirit was lofty. He was respectful to all those he came across, slighted himself wherever he stayed, and being virtuous he did not

[46] The earliest source about Baizhang's life is his stupa inscription, *Tang Hongzhou Baizhangshan gu Huaihai chanshi daming* 唐洪州百丈山故懷海禪師塔銘, which was composed by Zhen Xu 陣詡 soon after Baizhang's death. According to inscription's colophon, Baizhang's memorial stupa was unveiled on November 2, 818. In the inscription Zhen also states that he personally came in contact with Baizhang's teachings when he was on an official duty in Jiangxi. There are two editions of the text: in QTW 446.2014a-b, and in *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, T 48.1156b–57a. For a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering of the inscription (which is also accompanied with the original text) see Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū" 百丈清規の研究, pp. 20–23. Other pertinent sources are Baizhang's biographies in CDL 6.113–17, and ZTJ 14.317–21. His biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.770c–71a, mostly consists of recounting of the legend about Baizhang's establishment of a separate Chan monastery (which will be discussed in Chapter Nine), and if of little value as a biographical source.

seek renown. Thus, in the inscription of his late teacher (i.e. Mazu) only his name was obscured.[47]

Putting aside any assumptions about Baizhang's natural modesty, as he was in Hongzhou during Mazu's final years, and as he was also present at Shimen at the time when Mazu's stele was created and the inscription composed, his exclusion from the list probably does reflect Baizhang's relatively modest status in Mazu's community around 791.[48]

According to his stupa inscription, Baizhang was a scion of the powerful Wang clan 王氏 of Taiyuan 太原, one of the greatest aristocratic clans of Tang China.[49] He was born in 749, in Changle prefecture 長樂縣 in Fuzhou 福州 (Fujian), the area where his ancestors moved from the north during the Yongjia 永嘉 rebellion of 307–313.[50] Though we have no information about his early childhood, considering his family's background, we can assume that his family was well-off and that he received some classical education during his early childhood. His classical education is also evidenced in the extant records, whose contents indicate that he was well-taught. While he was still young, Baizhang

[47] QTW 446.2014a.

[48] Baizhang's relative youth at the time of Mazu's death can be one explanation for the omission of his name from the list. Baizhang was not yet forty in 788, and was fourteen years Xitang's junior. At the same time, Weikuan was Baizhang's junior, and his inclusion in the list indicates that seniority was not the main criterion in Quan Deyu's and/or Shimen monastic community's determination of who Mazu's main disciples were.

[49] ZTJ 14.317 mistakenly states that his surname was Huang 黃, while CDL does not provide any information about his surname.

[50] There is substantial discrepancy between Baizhang's dates given in his stupa inscription and the dates that are given in his biographies in CDL and SGSZ. Though all three sources agree on the date of his death, they disagree widely about his age at the time of his death. The stele inscription gives his age as sixty-five, while the other two text claim he lived up to the age of ninety-four, in which case his dates would be 720–814. I follow the inscription both because it is a more reliable source, and because the other dates make little sense in the context of the general chronology of Baizhang's activities. For additional discussion of Baizhang's dates, see Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 234, Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," pp. 19–20, and Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 371–72.

entered monastic life under a monk called Huizhao 慧照 (d.u.) of Xishan 西山 (in Guangdong).[51] The same monk was also the teacher of Yaoshan, who was four years Baizhang's senior. It is quite possible that Baizhang and Yaoshan knew each other from their youth, and that they started their study of Buddhism together under Huizhao.[52] Baizhang received his full monastic ordination at Heng mountain 衡山 (i.e. Nanyue, Hunan) in 767, with a Vinaya teacher called Fazhao 法照 (d.u.) serving as his preceptor.[53] After his ordination he moved to Lujiang 廬江 (Anhui), where he studied the Buddhist scriptures.

Baizhang joined Mazu while the latter was residing at Gonggong mountain.[54] That means that he must have moved to southern Jiangxi shortly before Mazu's departure to Hongzhou around 770, while he was still only in his twenties.[55] Baizhang followed his teacher when Mazu, together with a group of his disciples, moved to Hongzhou. After

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[51] The ZTJ biography contains the following charming story that in a dramatized fashion depicts Baizhang's early religious aspiration: "When he was a young boy, [Baizhang] was taken by his mother to a monastery to worship the Buddha. Pointing to the Buddha's image, he asked his mother, 'What is that?' His mother said, 'This is the Buddha.' The child said, 'His appearance resembles that of a man, and is not different from mine. In the future I will also became like that.'" ZTJ 14.317.

[52] See Yaoshan's biography in SGSZ 17, T 50.816a-c (which, it is interesting to note, is included under the category "Dharma protectors," *hufa* 護法). Ui has suggested that this Huizhao is the same monk as Huairang's disciple Shenzhao 神照, whose name is listed at the beginning of fascicle 6 of CDL. See Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, vol. 2, p. 329, as well as Yinshun, *Zhongguo chanzong shi*, p. 321, which makes the same argument. Though it is possible that Baizhang and Yaoshan started their monastic life under another disciple of Mazu's teacher, I think that such inference is based on circumstantial and somewhat unconvincing evidence.

[53] I have been unable to find any information about this monk.

[54] As one would expect, after Baizhang came to be perceived as Mazu's main disciple, there emerged a number of stories that in dramatic fashion purported to describe his training under Mazu. Some of these stories, which most probably have no genuine basis in historical events, were quoted in Chapter Two.

[55] The stupa inscription does not state where he met Mazu, but both the CDL and SGSZ biographies say that he went to study with Mazu at Nankang 南康, where Gonggong mountain was located.

Mazu's death in 788, he took up residence close to Mazu's memorial pagoda at Shimen mountain. Baizhang started to teach a group of disicples during his stay at Shimen, when he was already in his forties. Later, he was invited to take residence at the nearby Baizhang mountain. Located southwest of Shimen, Baizhang mountain, which was also known as Daxiong mountain 大雄山, was a secluded locale that had no previous association with the Chan tradition.[56] The circumstances of the establishment of a monastery at Baizhang mountain are not very clear, but as there are no records of famous officials becoming Baizhang's supporters, most probably his main supporters were members of the local elite who resided in the surrounding area.

During the approximately two decades of his teaching at the mountain, Baizhang attracted a considerable number of disciples. Among them by far the best known were Guishan and Huangbo, who are widely-recognized as the two main representatives of Mazu's second-generation disciples. Nonetheless, if we compare Baizhang's impact as a teacher to that of Mazu, there are noticeable differences both in the number of the disciples they taught, and in the regional backgrounds of their disciples. Not only were Baizhang's disciples far fewer in number when compared to those of his teacher, but virtually all of them had only limited regional influence. Their activities were for the most part confined to Jiangxi and the adjoining provinces. Among the twenty-five disciples for

[56] There is the following famous (but also rather late) story that supposedly expresses some of Baizhang's feelings about the mountain: "A monk asked Baizhang, 'What is [most] unique?' Baizhang said, 'Sitting alone on the summit of Daxiong [Mountain].' The monk bowed, and Baizhang hit him." *Baizhang yulu*, XZJ 119.409c. The same story forms the core of case 26 of *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄, T 48.166c.

whom we have data, eleven were active in Jiangxi, eight were active in the adjacent provinces, and none was active in the two capitals or other areas in Northern China.[57]

According to his stupa inscription, Baizhang died seated on his meditation seat on February 10, 814, at the age of sixty-five.[58] His body was buried on May 21 at Baizhang mountain's western peak. The rites that were used at the occasion of his funeral were in accordance with the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāśa-śāstra* (*Da piposha lun* 大毘婆沙論).[59] After Baizhang's death, it appears that his disciple Baizhang Fazheng 百丈法正 (d. 819) took over the leadership of the monastic community, and after Fazheng's death five years later he was presumably succeeded by another of Baizhang's disciples, Baizhang Niepan 百丈涅槃 (d. 828?).[60] In 821 the court bestowed on Baizhang the posthumous title

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[57] According to a table presented in Ishikawa Rikisan, "Baso kyōdan no tenkai to sono shijishatachi," KDBR 2 (1971), pp. 167–68, the geographical spread of the monasteries where Baizhang's better-known disciples took up residence and lead their monastic congregations was as follows: Hebei: 2; Henan: 2; Jiangxu: 2; Zhejiang: 3; Jiangxi: 11; Hunan: 2; Fujian: 1; and Guangdong: 2.

[58] See the text of the inscription in Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," p. 22.

[59] The Chinese translation of this large Indian treatise can be found in T 27.1–1004. Just as in the case of Mazu's inscription, the information about the orthodox Buddhist manner in which Baizhang's burial rites were performed reveals an unmistakable respect for ancient Buddhist traditions, and evokes an image of a community which considered the Buddhist scriptures and the writings of eminent Indian monks to be objects of reverence and foci of religious authority.

[60] See Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," pp. 39–40. However, in his *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 143, Suzuki has suggested that Baizhang Fazheng, Baizhang Niepan, and Baizhang Weizheng are all the same person. The confusion started with Fazheng's and Nieban's stele inscriptions (see QTW 713.3246a for the only extant fragment of Fazheng's inscription), and is also evident in the shifting of Weizheng's biography in CDL from among the biographies of Mazu's disciples to among Baizhang's disciples biographies, and vice versa, by the editors of different editions of CDL. Although there is little information about all three monks, and thus it is possible that the three names refer to the same monk (or perhaps two monks) who resided at Baizhang mountain, it seems better to assume that Mazu's disciple Weizheng should not be mixed with Baizhang's disciple(s), viz. that we are dealing with at least two persons. As for the Fazheng (who is mentioned in Baizhang's stupa inscription) and Niepan, it is still uncertain if they are the same person (as suggested by Suzuki) or two persons (as implied by Ishii), but to me at least Ishii's argument seems to be somewhat more convincing.

Dazhi chanshi 大智禪師 (Chan Teacher of Great Wisdom), and the appellation Dabao shenglun 大寶勝論 to his memorial pagoda.

The stupa inscription discloses that some of Baizhang's sermons were written down by two of his disciples, Shenxing 神行 and Fanyun 梵雲, who compiled a record (*yuben* 語本) of his teachings.[61] Baizhang also left a record of his correspondence with a monk from Fujian called Lingai 靈藹, which contained discussion about the existence of the Buddha-nature (*foxing* 佛性).[62] The recorded sermons and writings continued to circulate after Baizhang's death. Baizhang's subsequent great fame, however, was not due to the fact that his record contains the most complete and illuminating descriptions of the Hongzhou School's religious doctrines and its conception of Buddhist soteriology.[63] His fascinating sermons were for the most part ignored by the later Chan tradition, which instead focused on his legendary role as the putative founder of a distinct system of Chan monasticism, and on his posthumous status as the main recipient of Mazu's transmission of Chan enlightenment. Baizhang's involvement in the creation of unique Chan monasticism (or rather the legends about his alleged role in it) will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Nine. Here it will suffice to say that the legend about his role as the father of "Chan monasticism" is not in any meaningful way directly related to him as a historical person. During his life Baizhang did not create a set of monastic rules, nor did

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Furthermore, in an earlier article Yanagida suggested that Fazheng was a disciple of Mazu, not Baizhang. See Yanagida, "Shinzoku tōshi no keifu: jo no ichi," ZK 59 (1978), p. 25.

[61] Fanyun's name appears in the listing of Baizhang's disciples in CDL 9.148, but nothing is known about either him or Shenxing.

[62] QTW 446.2014a. There is no further information about Lingai.

[63] The contents of BGL will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

he envision a novel system of Chan monastic life that was institutionally disengaged from the mainstream traditions of Tang monasticism.

In his second role, as a recipient of Mazu's orthodox transmission of Chan, which supposedly was passed via Huangbo to Linji, Baizhang served as a crucial link between Mazu and Linji, the "founder" of the Linji School of Chan which during the Song period came to almost completely dominate the Chan tradition. As for his actual position within the Hongzhou School during his lifetime, as was noted above, it is quite apparent that at the time of Mazu's death Baizhang was not perceived as being among the leading disciples. During his stay at Shimen, Baizhang started to attract disciples, and after his move to Baizhang mountain he became a popular and influential teacher, even though his influence was mostly regional. Towards the end of his life he was probably one of the most influential disciples of Mazu active in the South, perhaps second to Xitang in stature, but he was not in any way recognized as Mazu's main disciple (except perhaps by some of his own disciples).

The tradition of depicting Xitang and Baizhang as Mazu's two main disciples probably started either before or soon after 814, the year Baizhang passed away.[64] At the same time, neither Baizhang nor any other disciple was perceived as taking over Mazu's position or becoming the "orthodox" recipient of his teaching. As we will see in the following pages, there were other distinguished disciples of Mazu who commanded great respect and exerted strong influence on their contemporaries. It is thus fair to say that no disciple came close to dominating the Hongzhou School in the way that Mazu did during

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[64] There are stories and statements in Chan literature that feature both Baizhang and Xitang, all of them either implicitly or explicitly suggesting that the two were Mazu's main disciples. The later editions of some of the stories also feature Nanquan. For examples, see *Baizhang yulu*, XZJ 119.409b, 410c-d, and CDL 6.113–14.

his lifetime. Long after his death, Mazu's towering figure continued to be the communal point of focus for the whole Hongzhou School. Baizhang and Xitang, together with the other disciples, continued to cherish the memory of their great teacher, and to evoke his image as a focus of devotion and source of authority.[65]

### Other Disciples in Jiangxi

***Northern Jiangxi.*** After Mazu's death. Letan monastery on Shimen mountain, the site of Mazu's burial and his memorial pagoda, remained a monastic center led by Mazu's disciples. Among Mazu's disciples who resided there, in addition to Baizhang, the most notable were Fahui, Weijian, and Changxing.[66] Unfortunately, we do not know much about these monks, and it is impossible to establish exactly when (or even if) any of them took over the leadership of the community on Shimen. Yet, the fact that these monks did reside and teach at Shimen indicates that Letan monastery continued to serve as a cultic

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[65] It is interesting to note that Baizhang's stupa inscription shows definite concern for delineating his spiritual lineage. Such concern with lineage is much in evidence in other inscriptions composed during the same period. That indicates an increased sense of emphasis on membership in a lineage as a proof of spiritual authority. The inscription states that he was a ninth generation representative of the Chan school in China, who received Huineng's teaching via Huairang and Mazu. QTW 446.2014a. Huineng is often maintained as a source of authority and exemplar of Chan orthodoxy in inscriptions from the same period, which suggests that his position as the sixth Chan patriarch was firmly-secured. Nonetheless, the inscription makes no claim that the transmission of Chan from Mazu to Baizhang was in any respect unique or superior to that of his contemporaries.

[66] For brief hagiographic entries for these monks, see CDL 6.110 (Weijian and Fahui), and CDL 7.119 (Changxing). Their entries contain virtually no biographical information, but merely consist of few short dialogues between them and other monks. Among them, the best known is the following dialogue between Weijian and Mazu, which also appears in MY: "One day [Weijian] was sitting in meditation at the back of Mazu's Dharma hall. Mazu saw him sitting, and blew twice in his ear. Weijian emerged from meditation, but when he saw it was Mazu, he entered meditation again. Mazu returned to abbot's quarters, and asked his attendant to take a bowl of tea to Weijian. Weijian ignored the attendant, and then he returned to the hall." CDL 6.110; translation adapted from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 71.

and teaching center for the Hongzhou School at least for a few decades after Mazu's death.[67]

In addition to Shimen, another important center of Chan practice in the vicinity of Hongzhou that during the early ninth century was dominated by Mazu's disciples was Lushan 廬山. The famous scenic mountain, celebrated by many Tang poets and writers, was located northwest of the Poyang lake 鄱陽 湖 in Jiangzhou 江州 prefecture (Jiangxi), just north of Hongzhou. Lushan's long history as a center of Buddhist practice went back to the period of disunity prior to the reunification of China under the Sui dynasty. There were a number of monasteries at the mountain, including the famous Donglin monastery where Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), the eminent Buddhist leader and propagator of faith in the pure land of Amithaba Buddha, resided during the Eastern Jin 東晉 dynasty (317–420). Nonetheless, until the end of the eight century there were virtually no Chan monks who settled at the mountain.[68]

The two senior disciples of Mazu who practiced and taught at the mountain, Guizong and Fazang, were the first Chan monks to take up residence at Lushan. Not much is known about Fazang. All the information about his life comes from his brief biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, which interestingly enough is classified in the category named "spiritual resonance" (*gantong* 感 通). He was born in Nangang (Jiangxi) in the Zhou 周 family. As a child he received classical education, the main focus of which was the study of historical works. He became a monk in his native province, and probably

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[67] Daotong's biography in SGSZ also states that he resided at Shimen for some time, after which he went to Nanyue to see Shitou. SGSZ 10, T 50.767c.

[68] According to some sources Daoxin, the putative fourth Chan patriarch, sojourned to Lushan before he moved to Huangmei (in present-day Hubei), where he establish his monastic community. See Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 123.

joined Mazu when the latter was residing at Gonggong mountain, which was located in Fazang's native prefecture. After taking leave from Mazu, he traveled north to Lushan. According to his biography, while trekking around the mountain, he became enchanted by the area around Wulao peak 五老峰 and decided to stay there. It seem that he spent the rest of his life in the mountain, leading a secluded life in a temple built by his supporters.[69]

***Guizong***. While Fazang led a tranquil life in a secluded part of Lushan, Guizong was more active and achoeved greater prominence. It was mostly due to him and his disciples that throughout the rest of the Tang Lushan remained one of Chan School's strongholds. The considerable impact of Mazu's disciples on the religious milieu at Lushan, and the flourishing of Mazu's image as a holy person and exalted religious leader, were reflected in the fact that one of the monasteries at the mountain was named Mazu monastery. In the same vein, one of the mountains that comprise the Lushan range that was close to the monastery was also called Mazu mountain.[70]

There is no information about Guizong's year and place of birth, and about his family background.[71] We also have no knowledge about his early religious studies, although it seems that he was among Mazu's youngest disciples. There are a few stories

[69] SGSZ 20, T 50.840b.

[70] Mazu monastery was located in the northern part of Lushan. For more information about the monastery, see *Lushan zhi* 廬山志, in Du Jiexiang 杜潔祥, ed., *Zhongguo fosi shizhi huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊 16, pp. 315–17. For a map that shows its exact location, see Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 363.

[71] The main source on Guizong's life is his short biography in SGSZ 17, T 50.817b-c. As is the case with Yaoshan's biography, for some unclear reason Zanning placed Guizong's biography in the category of "Dharma protectors." His biography in CDL 7.128–30 is somewhat longer, but it mostly contains short dialogues, and has little relevant information about his life. There is also the ZTJ 15.340–44 biography, which adds a couple of poems and a few records of his conversations with noted literati.

that depict him as being close to Nanquan, and it is probable that he joined Mazu in Hongzhou around the same time as Nanquan.[72] According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Guizong moved to Lushan during the Yuanhe period (806–820). He then took up residence at Guizong temple, which was located in the southern part of the mountain.[73] By that time the temple, which was later renamed Guizong Chan monastery, already had a long history. It was originally established in 340 during the Eastern Jin dynasty to house an Indian monk, but Guizong was the first monk associated with the Chan School to assume temple's abbacy.[74]

As Guizong's community grew and he came to be recognized as an influential teacher in the Lushan area, his reputation attracted a few noted officials who visited Lushan during their assignment to provincial government posts in the southern provinces. Among them, the best-known were the celebrated poet Bo Juyi, and the above-mentioned Li Bo, the literatus who wrote Xitang's stele inscription.[75] Bo probably met with Guizong during the 815–818 period, while he was posted as a marshal of Jiangzhou 江州.[76] During that period Bo often visited Lushan, and he even built himself a small cottage in the mountain, where he enjoyed a life of solitude and personal reflection.[77] The extent of

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[72] See SGSZ 17, T 50.817b.

[73] Guizong also came to be known as "Red-eyed Guizong" because during his stay at Lushan he developed an inflammation of his eyes that caused them to become red. SGSZ 17, T 50.817c.

[74] See *Lushan ji* 廬山記, T 51.1032b, and *Lushan Chengtian Guizongchansi zhongxiusi ji* 廬山承天歸宗禪寺重修寺記, in *Wuxi ji* 武溪集 7.4b (SKQS ed.), as well as Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 148.

[75] It is possible that Guizong himself was interested in poetry. In addition to the poems recorded in his biography in ZTJ, another one of his poems is preserved in CDL 30.609–10.

[76] Bo's meeting with Guizong is described in SGSZ 17, T 50.817b.

[77] Bo immortalized his experience at the cottage in a famous essay composed in 817, entitled "Caotang ji" 草堂記, in *Bo Juyi ji* 白居易集 43, vol. 3, pp. 933–35. For a translation, see Strassberg,

Bo's contact with Guishan is not entirely clear. There is a poem which Bo composed for Guizong, and it is clear that Bo went to Guishan to inquire about the teachings of Buddhism.[78] At the same time, as most information about their meeting comes from Buddhist sources rather than Bo's own writings, it appears that the relationship between the two was not as strong as the one that Bo developed with Weikuan and Ruman, two of Mazu's disciples who were active in the capitals.[79]

Li Bo's contact with Guizong is somewhat better documented.[80] Like his friend Bo, Li—who was also know as Li Wanjuan 李萬卷 (Ten-thousand Fascicles Li) because of his extensive learning—also served as a marshal of Jiangzhou. Moreover, also in a similar way to Bo, he was interested of Buddhism, and had contacts with other Chan monks. *Zutang ji* records the following conversation between him and Guizong:

> Li Wanchuan asked the master, "Among the Buddhist teachings there is the saying, 'Sumeru mountain admits a mustard seed, and a mustered seed admits Sumeru mountain.' Nobody will doubt that Sumeru can admit a mustard seed, but as for a mustard seed admitting Sumeru, is not that really a false statement?" The

Richard E., *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China*, pp. 134–36. For Bo's involvement with Buddhism during this period, see Hirano Kensho 平野顯照, "Haku Kyoi no bungaku to bukkyō" 白居易の文學と佛教, *Ōtani daigaku kenkyū nenpō* 16 (1963), pp. 132–41, and Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 200–05. Bo's relationship with Lushan and its impact on his poetry are discussed in Shimosada Masahiro 下定雅弘, *Hakushi bunshū o yomu* 白氏文集を讀む, pp. 200–224. For a general overview of Bo's life and literary activities during his posting in Jiangzhou, see Arthur Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chü-i*, pp. 105–06, 115–28, and Hanafusa Eiju 花房英樹, *Haku Kyoi kenkyū* 白居易研究, pp. 53–61.

[78] See *Boshi changqing ji* 白氏長慶集 16, and Sun Changwu 孫昌武 *Tangdai wenxue yu fojiao* 唐代文學與佛教, p. 186, and Idem, "Haku Kyoi to bukkyō: zen to jōdo" 白居易と佛教・禪と淨土, in Ōta Tsugio 太田次男, et al., eds., *Haku Kyoi kenkyū kōza* 白居易研究講座, vol. 1 (translated by Soejima Ichirō 副島一郎), p. 187.

[79] I have been unable to find any mention of Guizong in Bo's writings. Bo's relationship with some of Mazu's other disciples will be discussed in the next chapter.

[80] Li's study with Guizong is noted in the following sources: SGSZ 17, T 50.817b-c; CDL 7.130; ZTJ 15.340–41; and *Lushan ji*, T 51.1032b.

> master responded by asking, "What kind of qualification do you have for serving the country?" With indignant voice Li replied, "Has not the reverend heard that your disciple has mastered ten-thousand fascicles [of classical texts]." The master said, "Why do you try to deceive me?" Li said, "How do I try to deceive you?" The master said, "As your body composed of the four elements can be compared in size to the seed [mentioned in the previous simile], where did you place the ten-thousand fascicles [of texts]?" Upon hearing these words Li showed his respect and thanked the master, and afterwards he served him [as a disciple].[81]

Even though the later Chan tradition for the most part overlooked Guizong's position in the history of mid-Tang Chan, during his lifetime he was well-regarded by his contemporaries. There are even indications that he was arguably one of Mazu's more influential disciples. Huangbo is recorded as offering the following testimony to Guizong's spiritual achievements and his standing among Mazu's disciples: "Among the eighty-four disciples of Great Teacher Ma who sat at the site of enlightenment, the number of those who obtained Teacher Ma's proper eye does not go beyond two or three. Rev. Lushan (i.e. Guizong) was one of them."[82]

***South of Hongzhou***. Among Mazu's disciples who took up residence and taught in the southern part of Jiangxi, we have information about Shigong, Daoming, and Zhenshu. Shigong, the most colorful character among the three, was apparently a hunter with anti-Buddhist predilections before he was converted to Buddhism by Mazu.[83] There

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[81] ZTJ 16.340. A different version of this conversation can be found in CDL 7.130.

[82] CDL 9.154, and ZTJ 16.364. The ZTJ version, as well as the Song edition of CDL, have "eighty-eight" disciples instead of "eighty-four."

[83] Shigong's biography in CDL contains the following story, which in a highly dramatized fashion depicts his first meeting with Mazu:

> Chan Master Huizang of Shigong used to be a hunter [before becoming a monk]. He disliked monks. One day, as he was chasing a herd of deer, he happened to pass in front of Mazu's hermitage. Mazu greeted him. Huizang asked, "Has the Reverent seen a herd of deer passing nearby?" Mazu asked him, "Who are you?" Huizang replied, "I am a hunter." Mazu asked, "Do you know how to shoot?" Huizang said, "Yes, I know." Mazu asked, "How many deer

is not much information about Shigong's life, but it seems that he was among Mazu's early disciples who joined him after his move to Linchuan 臨川.[84] Shigong mountain, where he established his monastery, was located just south of Linchuan and was part of the same prefecture, Fuzhou 撫州.

We know even less about the activities of Daoming, whose monastery was located on Nanyuan mountain in Yuanzhou 袁州 prefecture, in the western part of Jiangxi.[85] There is slightly more information about Zhenshu, whose monastery at Yangqi mountain was in the immediate vicinity of Nanyuan.[86] Described as a bright and unconventional child, Zhenshu apparently became interested in Buddhism during his youth, and soon

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> can you shoot with a single arrow?" Huizang said, "With a single arrow I can shoot only one deer." Mazu said, "You don't know how to shoot." Huizang then asked, "Does the Reverent know how to shoot?" Mazu said, "Yes, I know." Huizang asked, "How many can the Reverent shoot with a single arrow?" Mazu said, "With a single arrow I can shoot a whole herd." Huizang said, "They also have life. Why shoot the whole herd?" Mazu said, "If you know that, then why don't you shoot yourself?" Huizang replied, "If you ask me to shoot myself, I cannot do that." Mazu said, "Ah, this man. All his ignorance and defilements accumulated over vast eons have today suddenly come to an end." At that point Huizang destroyed his bow and arrows. He cut off his hair with a knife, and became a monk with Mazu.

CDL 6.111; translation adopted (with minor adjustments) from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 71–72. A similar version of the same story can also be found in ZTJ 14.314.

[84] Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 168.

[85] His brief biographies in CDL 6.112–13 and ZTJ 14.316, which contain little that is of great interest, mention that during his early monastic training Dongshan 洞山 (807–869) came to study with him.

[86] Main sources about him are his stele inscription, *Yangqishan Zhenshu dashi beiming* 陽岐山甄叔大師碑銘, QTW 919.4245a-b, composed by Zhixian 至賢, and his biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.770b-c (which for the most part is based on the inscription). There is also his brief biographical entry in CDL 8.143–44, which does not add any useful information. The identity of the stele inscription's author is unclear, but Suzuki has argued that the name in QTW is mistaken, and that this monks name should be read as Zhixian 至閑. Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 165–66. If that is the case, he might be the same monk as Zhixian 志閑, who is mentioned in Wuxie's biography in SGSZ 10, T 50.769a, as the author of Wuxie's record. See discussion in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 531.

after becoming a monk he joined Mazu's community. During the late 770s he moved to Yangqi mountain. There he spent over forty years, leading a quiet contemplative life and mainly concerning himself with teaching his disciples. Yangqi mountain continued to serve as a hub for Chan practice long after his death. It became an especially important Chan center during the early eleventh century under the leadership of Yangqi Fanghui 楊岐方會 (992–1049), the founder of the Yangqi lineage of Linji Chan, one of Linji School's two main lineages that greatly flourished during the Song period.[87]

In addition to the above monks, another important disciple of Mazu who was active in Jiangxi was Dayi. Although after he left Mazu during the 770s Dayi taught at Ehu mountain in northeastern Jiangxi, as his most significant teaching activity took place in the capital Changan, he will be discussed in the next chapter.

### Disciples Active in Other Parts of the South

***Hunan***. Outside of Jiangxi, among the Southern provinces the largest concentrations of locales in which Mazu's disciples establish their own monastic communities were the adjacent provinces of Hunan to the west and Zhejiang to the northeast. Most of Mazu's disciples who were active in Hunan were also students of Shitou. Though Shitou's influence was rather limited, locally he was a respected teacher, and most Chan monks who came to the Nanyue area during his later years did spend at least some time studying with him. The location of his monastery at Nanyue probably positively influenced his ability to attract disciples, since the mountain was an important religious center visited by many monks.

[87] Both 陽岐 and 楊 岐 refer to the same mountain.

Mazu's best known disciple who was active in Hunan was Yaoshan, whose monastery was located in the northern part of the province, just west of Dongting lake 洞庭湖. As discussed in Chapter Four, after concluding his training with Mazu, Yanshan went to study with Shitou, and the later Chan tradition came to consider him as a main representative of Shitou's lineage. In addition to Yaoshan, other noted disciples active in Hunan included Ruhui, Tanzang, Deng Yingfeng, and Huilang.

A native of Guangdong, Ruhui was one of the students of Jingshan of the Niutou School who came to study with Mazu.[88] According to his biography in *Zutang ji*, he went to Jingshan's monastery in 773. That means he became Mazu's student after the latter moved to Hongzhou. At a later date (the sources give no precise information about when it happened), he was invited to take up residence at Dong (eastern) monastery in Changsha 長沙, eastern Hunan. In his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning writes that at the time of Ruhui's move to Changsha the Hongzhou School was greatly flourishing and was without any equals, and Dong monastery was popularly known as "Chan grotto" (*chanku* 禪窟).[89]

Ruhui's lay supporters included Cui Qun 崔群 (772–832), who served as a prime minister during Xianzong's reign.[90] Cui was a well-placed official of noble extraction, whose Cui clan from Qingho was one of the seven main clans of the Shandong aristocracy. The two most likely met during Ruhui's final years, after Cui's appointment as civil governor of Huainan at the beginning of 819. Cui's commission to this provincial post came in the wake of his and Chief Minister Pei Du's 裴度 (765–839) unsuccessful

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[88] The main biographical sources about him are in SGSZ 11, T 50.773b, ZTJ 15.338–39, and CDL 7.127–28.

[89] SGSZ 11, T 50.773b.

bid in 818 to block the appointment of the finance official Huangfu Bo 皇甫鎛 (c. 755–820) to the position of chief ministership.[91] After Ruhui's death in 823 at the age of seventy-nine, he received from the emperor the posthumous title Chuanming 傳明 and his memorial stupa was named Yongji 永際. His commemorative inscription was composed by Liu Ke 劉軻 (d.u.), who also wrote inscriptions for Nanquan and other Chan monks.[92]

In addition to Yaoshan, Tanzang, Huilang, and Deng Yingfeng were all disciples of Mazu who also studied with Shitou at Nanyue mountain. Little is known about Huilang.[93] His short biographies in *Chuandeng lu* and *Zutang ji* provide only the following information: He was born in the Ouyang 歐陽 family in Shixing 始興, Guangdong. He entered monastic life at the age of thirteen, and after coming to Nanyue in 755 he received the full monastic precepts there three year later. Huilang studied with Mazu at Gonggong mountain, and with Shitou at Nanyue. During the later part of his life, he settled at Zhaodi monastery in Changsha prefecture, where he stayed for over thirty years, from around 790 until his death in 820. The later Chan tradition came to consider

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[90] Official biographies in JTS 159.4187–90, and XTS 165.5080–82.

[91] See SGSZ 11, T 50.773b, as well as Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 27, and Charles A. Peterson, "Court and province in mid- and late T'ang," in Denis Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 3: Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part I*, pp. 632–33.

[92] SGSZ 11, T 50.773b. Liu is not accorded a biography in the standard histories.

[93] See Huilang's entries in CDL 14.264, and ZTJ 4.102. Furthermore, according to *Shaozhou Yuehuashan huajiesi chuanfa zhuchi ji* 韶州月華山花界寺傳法主持記, an inscription preserved in the Song dynasty *Wuxi ji* 武溪集 9.8a (SKQS ed.), his memorial inscription was composed by Liu Ke, who, as I mentioned above, also composed Ruhui's inscription, as well as inscriptions for Shitou, Danxia, and Nanquan. See Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 25. This inscription also states that he resided and taught at Yuehua mountain in his native prefecture. If true, that might mean either that he moved between Hunan and Guangdong, or that the statement in CDL according to which he stayed at Zhaodi monastery for thirty years is not correct.

him a member of Shitou's lineage. With regard to Tanzang, he was a reclusive monk who in 786 came to live in the vicinity of a secluded peak in the Nanyue mountain range.[94] As he grew old, because of poor health (the biography says he developed a leg ailment) he moved to the Western Garden hermitage (Xiyuan lanre 西園蘭若). There he became increasingly active in teaching the monks who came to seek his spiritual guidance.

Though after his stay at Shitou's monastery Yingfeng also decided to take up residence at Nanyue, unlike Tanzang he did not choose the spend the rest of his life at the mountain. Born in Fujian, the young Yingfeng is described as an awkward child and a slow learner.[95] After a long stay at Nanyue, where he must have arrived sometime before Shitou's death in 790, during the Yuanhe era (806–820) he moved to Wutai mountain in Shanxi, the famous pilgrimage center dedicated to Bodhisatva Mañjuśri.[96] Though Yingfeng died at the holy mountain, it appears that he did not settle there permanently either. His biography in *Chuandeng lu* states that he spent the summers at Wutai and the winters at Nanyue, and that he also undertook pilgrimages to other areas. During his periods of peripatetic life he went to visit other centers of Chan practice, including Nanquan's and Guishan's monasteries.[97]

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[94] Main biographical sources about him are his entries in SGSZ 11, T 50.774a-b, and CDL 8.141, both of which are rather brief and very similar. Large parts of both of them consist of a hagiographic story about Tanzang's mystical dog and his feat of subduing a large malevolent python.

[95] The main biographical sources about him are his entries in SGSZ 21, T 50.847a, and CDL 8.136–37. The headline of the SGSZ biography has Beitai 北臺 (mountain) instead of Wutai 五臺.

[96] SGSZ 21, T 50.847a.

[97] Both the SGSZ and CDL biographies contain slightly different versions of a rather bizarre story about his death at Wutai. The CDL version of the story is as follows:

> When he was about to pass away in front of the Diamond Cave, [Yingfeng] asked his monks, "I have already seen people passing away while sitting or lying. Has there been anyone who has passed away standing?" The monks answered, "Yes, there has been." The Master asked,

***Zhejiang***. Zhejiang was the southern province that, after Jiangxi and ahead of Hunan, witnessed the largest influx of disciples of Mazu. The best-known among the monks who took up residence in the province were Yanguan, Dazhu, and Damei. Yanguan was born in Haiting county 海汀郡 (in present-day Zhejiang).[98] His surname was Li 李, and he was related to the Tang royal family. Yanguan entered monastic life in his native county while he was still young. When he reached the age of twenty, he received the full monastic precepts at Nanyue, with Vinaya teacher Zhiyan 智嚴 serving

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> "And how about anyone passing away while standing on his head?" The monks said, "We have not heard about anyone doing that." The Master then stood on his head and passed away. He looked dignified and his robe stayed properly attired on his body. When the monks decided to lift the body and take it away for cremation, the body was still standing erect and it was impossible to move it. People from near and far came to see this. Everyone greatly marveled at this occurrence. The Master had a sister who was a nun. When she came to see the body, she bowed, came close, and shouted, "Brother! While alive you didn't comply with the Dharma-Vinaya; even after your death you are still confusing people." She then pushed the body with her hand and the body fall flat on the ground. Soon afterwards the body was cremated.

CDL 8.137; translation adapted from Cheng-Chien, *Sun-face Buddha*, pp. 135–36. This story is quite interesting because it is one of the rare instances in which a woman, in this case a nun, appears in Chan records about the Tang period. Moreover, the story is even more remarkable because of its unusual portrayal of the anonymous nun, who is presented as being spiritually superior, or at least equal, to a male Chan teacher.

[98] The main source about his life is his stupa inscription, *Hangzhou Yanguan-xian Haichan-yuan Chanmen dashi dabei* 杭州鹽官縣海昌院禪門大師塔碑, which was composed by Lu Jianqiu 盧簡求 (789–846). The inscription is preserved in the following two collections: QTW 733.3354b-c, and WYYH 868.4578a–79a. Lu also wrote a second inscription on the back of the stele, *Chanmen dashi beiyin ji* 禪門大師碑陰記, QTW 733.3354a-b, which was composed around 850 during the restoration of Buddhism initiated by emperor Xuanzong after the end of the Huichang persecution. An additional source is his biography in SGSZ 11, T50.776b–77a, which seems to be based on the stupa inscription, although there are some discrepancies between the two (they mainly consist of differences in the names of persons and places, which might be due to copying errors or misprints). There are also the less useful biographies in CDL 7.124–25 and ZTJ 15.332. All of the above sources do not provide any direct information about the year of his birth, but based on inscription's statement that he was "over seventy years old" around 820, we can deduce that he was about the same age as Baizhang. If we accept this interpretation, that means that he lived to be over ninety, which makes his life-span remarkably long for his time.

as his preceptor.[99] Soon after his ordination, Yanguan heard about Mazu, who at the time was teaching at Gonggong mountain, and he sojourned there to study with him. The meeting with Mazu must have taken place just before the move to Hongzhou, and it is probable that Yanguan followed his new teacher to the new post at Kaiyuan monastery. It is unclear how long he studied with Mazu, and we are also without any information about his whereabouts during the three decades following Mazu's death.

Towards the end of the Yuanhe era (806–820), when he was apparently already over seventy years old, Yanguan settled at Fale monastery 法樂寺 in Yuezhou 越州 (located in Zhejiang province, just south of Hangzhou). He was then invited to Yanguan, which was just north across the Hangzhou bay. There a new temple was built for him, and he was invited to become its abbot. After taking residence at the temple, which was named Haichang-yuan 海昌院, Yanguan attracted a considerable number of disciples and had a successful teaching career. He remained at the temple until his death, which took place on January 24, 843.

According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* biography, before assuming the throne, the future emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859) visited Yanguan's monastery, and during his stay there he was suitably impressed by its elderly abbot. After becoming emperor in 846, the strongly pro-Buddhist Xuanzong bestowed on Yanguan the posthumous title Wukong

[99] Following SGSZ, while the stele inscription instead gives this monk's name as Zhiyan 知嚴.

悟空.[100] Among Yanguan's disciples, his Korean disciple Pŏmil became known as the founder of the Sagul-san School of Silla Chan/Sŏn.[101]

Though Dazhu was accepted as one Mazu's leading disciples both by his contemporaries and by the later Chan tradition, there is very little information about his life.[102] Dazhu's prominent position and his seniority among Mazu's disciples is indicated by the inclusion of his name at the top of the list of disciples that appear in Mazu's stele inscription.[103] In the same vein, his biographies in *Chuandeng lu* and *Zutang ji* are presented just after Mazu's biographies, and ahead of the biographies of all other disciples. Dazhu was born in Jianzhou 建州 (Fujian). He most probably joined Mazu just as the later was starting his teaching career at Fojiyan, which was not far from Dazhu's native place. However, the *Chuandeng lu* biography, whose reliability is suspect, contradicts this sequence of events. Instead, it states that he was ordained in Yuezhou (Zhejiang), and then went to Jiangxi, where he studied with Mazu for six years, after which he returned to Yuezhou to take care of his first teacher, who at the time was very old and sick.[104]

It seems that Dazhu was considerably older than most of Mazu's other disciples, and he might have been close in age to Mazu. His seniority, coupled with the fact that he

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[100] SGSZ 11, T 50.777a. However, as pointed by Suzuki, the second stele makes no mention of the title. That has led Suzuki to surmise that the source used by Zanning was another stele, which is now lost but whose title is mentioned in *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 1. Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshūshi*, pp. 135–36.

[101] See Table 2 earlier in this chapter.

[102] The earliest sources of information about him are his biographies in ZTJ 14.309–11, and CDL 6.106–09. The earlier of the two was compiled well over a century after his death.

[103] See the quotation from the inscription at the beginning of this chapter.

[104] CDL 6.106.

was among Mazu's first disciples, probably explains his esteemed position within the Hongzhou School. At the same time, his relationship with Mazu was not nearly as strong as that between Mazu and other noted disciples, such as Xiatang and Baizhang. Moreover, since he left Mazu long before the latter attracted larger following and became a well-known teacher, in terms of his participation in the development of the Hongzhou School, for the most part Dazhu played the role of an outsider. Dazhu is best-known as the author of the renowned *Dunwu rudao yaomenlun* 頓悟入道要門論, his seminal treatise on Chan doctrine. The treatise exhibits traces of the influence of Shehui's writings, and it was probably written sometime around the 765–885 period. It is conceivable that Mazu read the treatise and was suitably impressed by it, as is indicated by a story in Dazhu's biography in *Chuandeng lu* (which admittedly is of an uncertain origin).[105]

Damei, the last of the three main disciples active in Zhejiang mentioned at the beginning of this section, was born in Huaiyang 襄陽 (in present-day Hubei).[106] His family name was Zheng 鄭, and he entered monastic life during his youth at the famous Yuquan monastery 玉泉寺 in Jingzhou 荊州 (also in Hubei). According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, as a child Damei had prodigious memory, and was able to memorize a large amount of scripture. It is not clear when he met Mazu or how long he studied with him, but considering his age, the two must have met during Mazu's later

[105] Ibid.

[106] The main biographical source about him is his short biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.776a-b. This biography was probably based on a stele inscription composed by Jiang Ji 江積, which was written one year after his death. See Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshūshi*, p. 148. Other sources are his biographies in CDL 7.125–26, and ZTJ 15.336–37. It is interesting to note that the SGSZ biography makes no mention of his study with Mazu.

years at Kaiyuan monastery.[107] Sometime after leaving Mazu's monastery, perhaps after Mazu's death, Damei went to Tiantai mountain, and from there in 796 he moved to Damei mountain in Zhejiang. It is conceivable that Damei developed an interest in Tiantai studies during the early part of his monastic life, as Yuquan monastery, where he was ordained, had a long tradition as a center for the study of Tiantai doctrine.[108]

It seems that during the four decades he spent at the mountain, Damei led a quiet, contemplative life, and that he was not greatly concerned with teaching either monastic or lay students. In 836, when he was already at the ripe age of eighty-four, a larger temple was built for him at the mountain. After moving there, he started to teach; before long he attracted a considerable number of students. That did not last long, however, as in 739 he suddenly became ill and died. Damei's best-known disciple was Hangzhou Tianlong 杭州天龍 (d.u.). In addition, like Yanguan, he also taught a few Korean monks who came

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[107] The story of Damei's study with Mazu is well-known in Chan literature (although most likely the story was created only after Damei's death). The MY version of the story is as follows:

> When Chan Teacher Fachang of Damei Mountain went to see Mazu for the first time, he asked, "What is Buddha?" Mazu replied, "Mind is Buddha." [On hearing this] Fachang had a great awakening. Later he went to live on Damei mountain. When Mazu heard that he was residing on the mountain, he sent one of his monks to go there and ask Fachang, "What did the Reverend obtain when he saw Mazu, so that he has come to live on this mountain?" Fachang said, "Mazu told me that mind is Buddha. So I came to live here." The monk said, "Mazu's teaching has changed recently." Fachang asked, "What is the difference?" The monk said, "Nowadays he also says, 'Neither mind nor Buddha.'" Fachang said, "That old man still hasn't stopped confusing people. You can have 'neither mind nor Buddha,' I only care for 'mind is Buddha.'" The monk returned to Mazu and reported what has happened. "The plum is ripe." said Mazu.

XZJ 119.47c-d; translation adapted (with slight modifications) from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 73–74. In the SGSZ biography, however, it is Yanguan who says "The plum is ripe." The same is true of a longer version of the same story in ZTJ 15.335–36. To make matters even more complicated, in the CDL 7.127 version of the story, which for the most part is similar to the ZTJ version, Yanguan also plays important part in the story-line, but the final part is same as in the MY version.

[108] This monastery was briefly introduced in Chapter Three.

to southern China to study Chan.[109] Some of Damei's sermons were recorded and later included in a text entitled *Mingzhou Dameishan Chang chanshi yulu* 明州大梅山常禪師語錄, a rare copy of which was preserved in Japan.[110]

In addition to the above three monks, other disciples of Mazu active in Zhejiang were Zhizang, Ningbi, Tienmu, and Wuxie. Furthermore, among Mazu's disciples who took residence in other parts of the South, in Fujian there were Wuliao and Shuitang 水唐, while the small number of disciples who settled in Guangdong included Shaozhou Ruyuan 韶州乳源 and Lofu Xiuguang 羅浮修廣.[111]

**Concluding Remarks**

As major representatives of the Southern School of Chan, Mazu and his disciples are usually viewed as originators of a movement that was primarily local in character. According to most common interpretations, their movement was based, as the name of their larger tradition suggests, in the southern part of China. There is of course some truth to that assertion. Mazu himself taught in Jiangxi and, as we saw in this chapter, his disciples spread the Hongzhou School throughout the southern provinces. The process of the regional spread of the Hongzhou School started around the time of Mazu's move to Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou. From that period onward, some of his senior disciples

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[109] His Korean disciples are mentioned in CDL 10.170, 185.

[110] The only edition of this record, which was not included in any Chan collection and which seems not to have been widely circulated, was preserved in the Kanazawa bunko collection in Yokohama. For a copy of this manuscript, see *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho: Butten 1, zenseki hen* 金澤文庫資料全書—佛典, 第一卷, 禪籍篇, pp. 13–18. For a discussion of the text, see Ishikawa Rikisan 石川力山, "Kanazawabunko-hon 'Minshū Daibaisan Jō zenji goroku' ni tsuite" 金澤文庫本《明州大梅山常禪師語錄》について, *Komazawa daigaku daigakuin bukkyōgaku kenkyūkai nenpō* 6 (1972), pp. 69–81.

[111] As was already pointed out, in addition teaching in Hunan, Huilang was probably also active in Guangdong.

one by one started leaving their teacher's monastery and charting their own independent courses. They moved on to other locations, where they gradually laid the foundations for their own religious communities. Within a couple of decades after Mazu's death, the permeation of the southern provinces by monasteries led by Mazu's disciples was for the most part accomplished. In this manner, from its narrower regional base in Hongzhou and the nearby prefectures, where leading disciples such as Xitang, Baizhang, and Guizong continued to be active, the Hongzhou School developed a broader and firmer foothold throughout the south, which from then on continued to be the main geographic center of the whole Chan School.

Nonetheless, the characterization of the Hongzhou School as a local southern tradition is not quite correct, as it reveals only one part of its evolution as a mature tradition of Chinese Buddhism. It is to the fascinating, but so far almost completely neglected, story of Hongzhou School's spread to the North that I turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

# *Further Spread of the Hongzhou School*

The Hongzhou School is usually described as the main representative of the so-called "Southern School" of Chan during the middle Tang period. This term was probably introduced by Shenhui during his attacks on the disciples of Shenxiu, whose tradition he pejoratively called the "Northern School." Evidently the designation Southern School was introduced in order to draw a sharp contrast between the supposedly "orthodox" tradition of Chan, which Shenhui claimed to have received from his teacher Huineng, and the "heterodox" teachings of Shenxiu's followers. The two terms, northern and southern, of course denoted geographical locations, as Huineng's monastery was located in the deep south while Shenxiu was mostly active in the north. But in their original usage, the terms were mostly employed as convenient slogans in Shenhui's sectarian diatribes against his self-designated opponents. In that way, they functioned primarily as ideological ploys that created artificially sharp distinctions between congenial groups of monks who shared much more than is usually acknowledged. On the whole, terms like Southern School and Northern School were primarily used as symbols for certain fractures and divisions within the Chan movement (both real and imagined), rather then as designations that denoted the geographic areas where particular schools of Chan were based.

The activities of Mazu's disciples were in no way confined only to the area south of the Yangtze river. Quite to the contrary, many of Mazu's disciples moved to the North, especially to the areas of the two Tang capitals of Changan and Luoyang. There, in a

relatively short time they established a strong presence for the Hongzhou School. Thus, far from being a provincial tradition solely based in the South, by the early ninth century the Hongzhou School emerged as a truly "national" tradition that represented the mainstream of Chan Buddhism. Even in the somewhat decentralized world of the post-rebellion empire, the North was still firmly established as the cultural and political center of China, and success in the capitals continued to be an important element in the setting of China's cultural, intellectual, and religious agendas. Because of that, the fortunes of the Hongzhou School, and its position as the main tradition of ninth century Chan, were to considerable degree linked to the success of the disciples who were active in the capitals and the surrounding areas.

This chapter continues the broad survey of the regional spread of the Hongzhou School that began in Chapter Five. Having examined the establishment of Hongzhou School's strong regional presence throughout the southern provinces, here I will focus on the activities of those disciples of Mazu who were active in the areas north of the Yangtze river. The main focus will be on the disciples who taught in the two Tang capitals, Changan and Luoyang. Though they were nearly forgotten by the post-Tang Chan tradition, and are neglected in normative accounts of Chan history, during their lifetimes these monks were popular Chan teachers in the cultural and political centers of the Tang empire. As such, they exerted crucial influence on the rise of Hongzhou School's fortunes, including the wider diffusion and acceptance of its religious ideas and practices. Their impact was such that Hongzhou School's emergence as the main tradition of Chan Buddhism cannot be properly understood without careful consideration of their careers as ground-breaking representatives of the Hongzhou School in the North.

## Expansion to the North

Although the disciples of Mazu who settled in various areas north of the Yangtze river were not as numerous as those in the South, nonetheless there were at least a few disciples in most areas of the North. Northeast of Hongzhou, in the area occupied by the present-day provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu, there were Nanquan, Zhijian, Taiyu, and Zhitong. To the west, in the area of present-day provinces of Hubei and Henan (excluding Luoyang, which will be discussed separately), there were Danxia, Wudeng, Funiu, and Daotong. Furthermore, in the North, viz. the area that corresponds to present-day Shanxi and Shaanxi (excluding Changan), there were Wuye, Zhixian, and Magu. None of these monks was quite as influential as Xitang and Baizhang in the South, or Weikuan and Huaihui in the capital (see below). Nonetheless, all of them became leaders of sizable monastic communities, and were recognized as elite members of the local clergy in the areas where they resided.

As far as the later Chan tradition is concerned, Nanquan was by far best-known among the monks listed above. Indeed, by the early Song he was widely recognized as one of Mazu's chief disciples, having eclipsed Xitang and emerged as second in popularity after Baizhang. This transformation of Nanquan, from one among Mazu's many locally prominent disciples to a main representative of classical Chan, was the result of a prolonged process of refashioning of his image and re-evaluation of his significance in the putative development of unique Chan modes of rhetoric and practice. The insertion of Nanquan into the small circle of Mazu's elite disciples is clearly evident in later versions of stories that originally featured only Baizhang and Xitang. For example, there is the following story:

> Once Xitang, Baizhang, and Nanquan accompanied the Patriarch (i.e. Mazu) to watch the moon. The Patriarch asked, "What shall we do now?" Xitang said, "We should make offerings." Baizhang said, "It is best to practice." Nanquan shook his sleeves and went away. The Patriarch said, "The scriptures enter the treasury, meditation returns to the sea.[1] It is Puyuan (i.e. Nanquan) alone who goes beyond all things."[2]

While in the earlier version this story featured only Xitang and Baizhang, in later versions Nanquan was also added. Not only was Nanquan thus included alongside Mazu's two leading disciples, but the story even suggested that he was superior to the other two. The reasons for the great change in Nanquan's status are not entirely clear, but I can point to two major factors. The first factor was the great popularity of Nanquan's best-known disciple Zhaozhou Zongshen 趙州從諗 (778–897), which contributed to the increased renown of Zhaozhou's teacher. The second factor was the popularity of numerous iconoclastic stories that featured Nanquan, often together with Zhaozhou. These stories started to appear during the late tenth century, well over a century after Nanquan's death. As a number of those stories were included in the influential *gongan* collections, such as *Biyan lu*, they became a much-admired part of Chan lore. That carved a new place for Nanquan's position among Chan worthies, as he came to be venerated as one of the main Chan teachers of the classical period.

During the early ninth century, Wuye was probably the most respected Chan teacher among the other monks listed above. According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, he was a native of Shangluo in Shangzhou province.[3] His family's surname was

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[1] The phrase "scriptures enter the treasury" refers to Xitang, given that the character for treasury appears in his religious name, Zhizang. In the same vein, "meditation returns to the sea" refers to Baizhang, whose religious name Huaihai means "cherishing the sea."

[2] MY, XZJ 118.407a, and CDL 6.113–14; Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 69. As a note inserted in the CDL editions points out, Nanquan does not appear in the earlier Song version of the story.

[3] See SGSZ 11, T 50.772b–73a.

Du. At the early age of nine, he started to study the Mahayana scriptures under the guidance of Chan teacher Zhiben. Among the texts he studied were the *Diamond, Lotus, Vimalakīrti,* and *Huayan* scriptures. After receiving the full monastic precepts from Vinaya teacher Yu of Xiangzhou in 779, Wuye studied also the commentaries of the *Four-division Vinaya*, and was supposedly able to lecture on them as soon as he had finished reading them. The biography also notes that he often lectured on the *Nirvana Scripture*. Wuye joined Mazu's monastery in Hongzhou during the last decade of Mazu's life. After he left the community there, he went further south to pay his respects to the stupa of the Sixth Patriarch. From there he continued on a long pilgrimage, during which he visited Lushan, Nanyue, Tiantai, and other holy mountains. Eventually he settled at Shangdang, where the provincial governor Li Baozhen held him in high esteem and paid him frequent visits. At that time, Wuye apparently became a much sought-after teacher, but he found that the pressures of the new predicament detracted him from his spiritual pursuits. Accordingly, he left Shangdang and went to Wudai mountain. There he spent eight years reading the whole Buddhist canon. After that, he moved to Fenzhou (located in present day Shanxi, just southwest of Taiyuan), where he was invited by Dong Shuchan, the district magistrate, to stay at Kaiyuan temple. At that point Wuye decided it was time for him to settle down, and during the following twenty years he instructed his disciples in Fenzhou.

Wuye's biography also states that after Xianzong heard about his reputation, in 819 and 820 the emperor sent two invitations for him to appear at the court. By that time the emperor had already received religious instruction from Mazu's two senior disciples who taught in Changan, Weikuan and Huaihui (see below), both of whom passed away not long before the invitation to Wuye was first issued. Wuye apparently did not comply

with the request, offering illness as an excuse. When the next emperor, Xianzong's son Muzong (r. 820-824), succeeded to the throne, he also sent messengers to invite Wuye to come to the capital. Wuye again declined to appear at court, and died during the following year.[4] He received the posthumous title National Teacher Dada (Great Penetration). The stupa built in his memory was called Chengyuan.

**From the Province to the Capital**

***Dayi***. The first monk associated with the Hongzhou School to enter Changan, the main Tang capital, was Mazu's disciple Dayi.[5] Born in 749 (the same year as Baizhang), Dayi was a native of Xujiang 須江 in Quzhou 衢州 (present-day Jiangshan in Zhejiang province). His family's surname was Xu 徐. They were of Korean ancestry. Dayi entered a monastery in his native prefecture while he was still young, and at the age of twenty he received the full monastic precepts. At that time he was interested in both Chan and the Vinaya. Soon after his ordination he joined Mazu's monastery, probably around 770, the time of Mazu's move to Hongzhou.

It seems that Dayi's study with Mazu did not last more then a few years, as his stele inscription states that he moved to Ehu mountain (located in western Jiangxi) during the Dali era (766–779).[6] At the time of his move to the area, Ehu mountain had no

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[4] SGSZ 11, T 51.773a, and *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記 42, T 49.384b.

[5] The earliest source about Dayi's life is his stele inscription, *Xingfusi neidaochang gongfeng dade dayi chanshi beiming* 興福寺內道場供奉大德大義禪師碑銘, QTW 715.3258a–59a. The inscription was composed by the official scholar Wei Chuhou 韋處厚 (773–823) soon after Dayi's death. For a Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering of the inscription, see Ishii Shūdō, "Enshū Yōgisan o meguru nanshūzen no dōkō" 袁州楊岐山をめぐる南宗禪の動向, IBK 38/2 (1990), pp. 199–202. Other relevant sources are his biographies in ZTJ 15.328–29 and CDL 7.121–22, both of which were to a large degree based on the inscription. For Wei Chuhou's official biography, see JTS 159.4182–87.

[6] QTW 715.3258c.

previous recorded history as a center of Buddhist activity, and Dayi is remembered as the first monk to have established a monastery (*kaishan* 開山) there.[7] After Dayi settled on the mountain, other monks came to study with him; eventually a sizable monastic community grew up around him. He spent over two decades at this monastery. During this period he established himself as an influential teacher, and his fame gradually spread beyond the local area where his monastery was located.

In the course of his stay at Ehu, Dayi met with various officials and literati who came to the area during their term of duty in the South. One of those officials was Liu Taizhen 劉太眞, who met Dayi at the beginning of the Zhenyuan 貞元 era (785–805). Liu invited Dayi to come down from the mountain, presumably to teach in the nearby city where Liu held the office of local prefect.[8] Another famous literatus with whom Dayi established a personal connection during that time was Li Ao.[9] Though we know little about this period of his life, we might speculate that because of his contacts with officials whose assignment to provincial posts in the South was followed by recall to the capital, Dayi came to be known in Changan. His supporters presumably conveyed favorable reports about him to others in the capital, including people in higher places. That eventually led to an official invitation for Dayi to come to teach at Changan.

Dayi was summoned to the capital towards the end of Dezong's long reign. He probably arrived in Changan not long before 805, the year of emperor's death.[10] After his

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[7] A wealth of information about Ehu mountain, especially its Buddhist history and the monks who resided on it, can be found in *Ehu fengding zhi* 鵝湖峰頂志, in *Zhongguo fosi zhi conkan* 中國佛寺誌叢刊 20, pp. 17–270.

[8] QTW 715.3258c. For Liu's biography, see JTS 137.3762–63.

[9] A conversation between Dayi and Li Ao is recounted in CDL 7.121–22.

[10] Following the inscription and the ZTJ biography. Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 395, states that he arrived in Changan in the fourth month of 803, without indicating the source of

arrival, he took up residence at the official Cien monastery 慈恩寺. Located in the southeast part of the city, Cien was one of the large imperial monasteries established during the first few decades of the Tang dynasty.[11] Soon after his arrival in Changan, Dayi lectured to Dezong. He also attended official ceremonies at the court, including a large public debate on the occasion of emperor's birthday.[12] The debate was held in the Linde Hall 麟德堂, located in the Daming palace complex, which from 663 had served as the main imperial residence.[13]

After Dezong's passing away, Dayi also lectured to the new emperor Shunzong 順宗 (r. 805), whose short reign lasted less then a year.[14] The association between Dayi and

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this information. The CDL biography, on the other hand, mistakenly states that he was invited to the capital by emperor Xianzong (r. 805–820). See CDL 7.122. The discrepancy between the sources concerning the time of his arrival in Changan is briefly discussed in Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 169.

[11] This monastery was established in 648 by Taizong (who at the time was still a crown prince) in memory of his deceased mother. That was also the monastery where the famous translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) did many of his translations of Buddhist scriptures after his return from India. For more information about the monastery, see Ōno Katsutoshi 小野勝年, *Zhūgoku Zui Tō Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: shiryō hen* 中國隋唐長安寺院史料集成—史料篇, pp. 84–115, and Idem, *Zhūgoku Zui Tō Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: kaisetsu hen* 中國隋唐長安寺院史料集成—解說篇, pp. 55–69, as well as Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 26–28.

[12] In ZJL there is a short record of Dayi's answers to questions posed by other monks in the capital. See ZJL 1, T 48.419a. The same record also contains a short question-and-answer exchange between Dayi and the emperor, although it is not clear whether the emperor in question is Dezong or Shunzong.

[13] See Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, pp. 101–02.

[14] A record of conversation between Dayi, Shunzong, and another monk can be found in ZTJ 15.329. In another version of the same story in CDL 7.122, the emperor participating in the discussion is Xianzong instead of Shunzong. The CDL biography also contains another record of a different conversation between Shunzong and Dayi.

Shunzong started while the latter was still a crown prince.[15] Shunzong was a devoted student and supporter of Buddhism, who commissioned commentaries from the famous Huayan exegete Chengguan, with whom he studied Buddhist doctrine.[16] Shunzong was also interested in Chan; in addition to Dayi, he also facilitated the lectures of other Chan monks at the court, including those of Mazu's disciple Ruman and Shitou's disciple Shili 尸利 (d.u.).[17]

Dayi's stele inscription also states that during his stay in Changan he held a debate with a "dharma teacher" (*fashi* 法師) called Zhanran 湛然 at a public assembly in Shenlong monastery 神龍寺. It is not clear if this is a reference to a putative meeting with the famous Tiantai exegete Zhanran (717–782), or pertains to an encounter with another monk of the same name. If the former is the case, that is obviously a mistake, as Zhanran died over two decades before the time when the meeting was supposed to have taken place.[18]

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[15] For more information on the short reign of this Tang monarch, see the translation of his veritable record, originally composed by Han Yu, in Bernard S. Solomon, trans., *The Veritable Record of the Tang Emperor Shun-ts'ung*.

[16] Chengguan wrote a short piece on the nature of the mind for Shunzong when the later was still a crown prince. Because of its notable use of a Chan-like idiom, this composition is also included in CDL 30.631–32. Shunzong's commissioning of this and another two texts from Chengguan are also mentioned in Chengguan's biography in SGSZ 5, T 50.737a-b.

[17] For Shunzong's invitation to Shili to teach at the court, see *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記, T 49.380b. Shili's very brief biographical entry in ZTJ 4.95 also contains the same brief excerpt from a conversation with the emperor. That is followed by a related conversation between the emperor and Dayi, presented in a manner suggesting that both monks had an audience with the emperor at the same time. Ruman's meeting with Shunzong will be discussed below.

[18] In her Columbia University dissertation, Linda L. Penkower suggests that the meeting between the two could have taken place, even though there is no mention in any of the sources about Zhanran's life that he ever visited Changan. This incorrect assumption seems to be based on her unawareness of the chronology of Dayi's life presented in the inscription. She suggests that the debate might have

Dayi's stay in the capital did not last very long. According to his inscription, as Shunzong's health was not good, Dayi returned to Ehu in 805. Thus, his stay in the capital was not more then a few years at the most. Nonetheless, despite its short duration, his visit to the capital was significant for being the first introduction of the teachings of the Hongzhou School to the very center of the Tang empire. During his stay in Changan, Dayi had ample opportunities to interact with people occupying office at the highest levels of secular authority, and to present them with a first-hand account of the doctrines and practices of the Hongzhou School.[19] In that sense, he paved the way for other younger fellow disciples of Mazu, who soon followed in his footsteps, and came to spread their religious teachings in the two capitals.

We have virtually no information about Dayi's activities after his return to his old monastery at Ehu mountain. In all likelihood he continued to teach his disciples until the end of his life more than a decade later. According to his inscription, on February 18, 818, Dayi announced to his disciples that seven days later he would make his "last offering." On the specified day, he peacefully left the world, in the kind of dignified manner that was deemed fitting for a sagely monk.

***Weikuan***. Although Dayi had the distinction of being the first disciple of Mazu to teach in the capital, the monks who had greatest impact on Hongzhou School's fortunes in the center of the Tang empire were Huaihui and Weikuan, his juniors and fellow disciples of Mazu. Weikuan, whowas the older by one year among the two, was born in

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taken place in 775, some three decades before Dayi's sojourn to Changan. See Penkower, "T'ian-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty: Chan-jan and the Sinification of Buddhism." p. 111.

[19] Although there are no reliable records of Dayi's teachings, in *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓 2, T 48.1048b-c, there is a short text about Chan meditation, entitled *Zuochan ming* 坐禪銘, that is

Xinan 信安, Quzhou 衢州 (in present-day Zhejiang), the same prefecture where Dayi's native place was located.[20] His family name was Zhu 祝. He entered monastic life at the age of twelve, and received the full monastic precepts in 778, at the age of twenty-three. Weikuan probably joined Mazu around that time, and remained with his teacher during Mazu's last decade of teaching in Hongzhou. In 790, soon after Mazu's passing away, Weikuan moved to the Minyue 閩越 area (which corresponds to the northern part of Fujian and the southern part of Zhejiang). This was the beginning of an extended period of semi-peripatetic life. He first went to Huiji 會稽 (Zhejiang) in 791, which was followed by sojourns to Poyang 鄱陽 (Jiangxi) in 792, Shaolin monastery 少林寺 on Song mountain 嵩山 in 797, Weiguo monastery 衛國寺 in 805,[21] and Tiangong monastery 天宮寺 (in Hongzhou) in 806.[22]

In 809 Emperor Xianzong—who, like his father Shunzong, was a fervent supporter of Buddhism and had a strong interest in the teachings of the Chan School—invited Weikuan to come to the capital and teach at the imperial court.[23] This invitation followed a similar summon issued to Huaihui during the previous year. Although there is no evidence to link the two, it is possible to surmise that there might have been a

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attributed to Dayi. If he was indeed the author of this text, that would make it the only text composed by a member of the Hongzhou School that is directly concerned with the practice of meditation.

[20] The earliest sources about his life is his memorial inscription, *Xijing xingshansi chuanfatang bei* 西京興善寺傳法堂碑, which was composed by Bo Juyi soon after Weikuan's death in 817.The inscription can be found in the following three collections: QTW 678.3069c–70a; *Boshi wenji* 白氏文集 41.11a–14a (SBCK ed.); and WYYH 866.4570b–71b. Additional sources are his biographies in SGSZ 10, T 50.768a-b, and CDL 7.127, both of which are based on Bo's inscription.

[21] The location of Weiguo monastery is uncertain.

[22] *Chuanfatang bei*, in *Boshi wenji*, p. 12b.

[23] In addition to Bo Juyi's inscription, Xianzong's invitation to Weikuan is also recorded in *Fozu tongji*, T 49.380c.

connection between the invitations extended to the two fellow disciples of Mazu, both of whom joined him during the period of Mazu's teaching at Hongzhou. After his arrival in Changan, Weikuan took up residence at Anguo monastery 安國寺, one of the most imposing monasteries in the capital.[24] In 810 he was invited to lecture to the emperor at the Linde Hall, where Dayi had lectured just few years earlier. Later Weikuan moved to Xingshan monastery, where he was to remain until the end of his life. Since its establishment as an official monastery at the beginning of the reign of emperor Wendi of the Sui dynasty, Xingshan—which like Anguo monastery was located in the eastern part of the city—was one of the largest monasteries in Changan.[25] Weikuan's stay there placed him at the center of the capital's (and to a large extent empires') religious life.

During his eight years in Changan, Weikuan attracted a large number of monastic and lay disciples, and emerged as one of the most influential Chan teachers in the imperial capital. According to Bo Juyi's inscription, he had over 1,000 disciples, of whom thirty-nine fully realized his teachings.[26] Bo himself was one of Weikuan's lay disciples.

Weikuan was a learned monk who possessed a number of qualities that made him quite appealing to the religious audiences in Changan. In addition to his study of Chan with Mazu, during his early years of monastic training he studied the Vinaya and the

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[24] For more information about Anguo monastery (which was also known as Da Anguo) see Ono, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: shiryō hen*, pp. 118–28, and Idem, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: kaisetsu hen*, pp. 69–77.

[25] For the historical sources about Xingshan (a.k.a. Da Xingshan) monastery, see Ono, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: shiryō hen*, pp. 118–28, and Idem, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: kaisetsu hen*, pp. 8–20. For the establishment of the monastery during the Sui dynasty, see Yamazaki Hiroshi 山崎宏, *Zui-Tō bukkyō shi no kenkyū* 隋唐佛教史の研究, pp. 45–47.

[26] CDL 10.170 lists the names of six of Weikuan's disciples, one of whom (together with another monk) is mentioned in Bo's inscription as Weikuan's two main disciples.

scriptures and teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. He was also proficient in the tenets and practices of the Tiantai School, especially its theory and practice of calmness and insight (*zhiguan* 止觀, Skt. *śamata-vipaśyanā*).[27] Furthermore, Weikuan was a charismatic religious figure known for his thaumaturgic powers. According to Bo's inscription, during his travels after leaving Mazu's monastery, Weikuan apparently performed such exceptional feats as subduing a tiger, bestowing the eight precepts upon a mountain spirit, and overcoming a group of bandits. What's more, Weikuan was also known for his meritorious deeds (the exact nature of which is not spelled out). Thus, Weikuan apparently possessed virtually all the qualities that members of the upper class society in Changan thought of as being characteristics of a charismatic and sagely monk: extensive learning, contemplative expertise, exemplary conduct and adherence to proper monastic mores, thaumaturgic power, and a flair for organizing popular meritorious activities.

Weikuan's mastery of such diverse forms of religious expertise made him a successful teacher in Changan, where he attracted a large number of monastic and lay followers. Among the literati and officials who came to request religious instruction, the most famous was Bo Juyi. Bo and Weikuan first met in 814, after Bo returned to the capital to assume the post of assistant secretary to the crown prince, following a three year mourning period for his deceased mother. At that time, Bo went to Xingshan monastery to request Weikuan's instructions about the teachings of the Chan School. Fortunately, some of the conversations between the aged monk and the famous poet are still extant, as Bo himself recorded them. The record consists of four questions posed by

[27] *Chuanfatang bei*, in *Boshi wenji*, p. 12a.

Bo—one about the role of a Chan teacher and three about related aspects of spiritual practice—each of which is followed by Weikuan's response.

> [1] Bo's question: "Since you are called a Chan teacher (*chanshi* 禪師), why do you explain the dharma (*fa* 法)?" Weikuan's answer: "When the unsurpassed *bodhi* (awakening) is expressed with the body, it is the Vinaya (*lü* 律, rules of discipline); when it is explained with the mouth, it is the dharma; when it is practiced with the mind, it is Chan. Though there are these three applications, in reality they are the same. It is like different names given to rivers and lakes; though their names are not the same, the nature of the water is the same everywhere. Vinaya is Dharma, and Dharma is not separated from Chan. How could one falsely create any distinctions among the three?"
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> [2] Bo's question: "Since there are no distinctions, why should one engage in mental cultivation?" Weikuan's answer: "The mind is fundamentally without defects, so how can one try to improve it through cultivation? One must not give rise to any thoughts, regardless of their defilement of purity." [28]
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> [3] Bo's question: "Since one should not think about defilements, is it that one should [also] not think about purity?" Weikuan's answer: "There should be nothing inside men's eye. Though gold dust is precious, it merely becomes a source of trouble when it enters the eye."
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> [4] Bo's question: "When there is no cultivation and no thought, how does one differ from an ordinary person?" Weikuan's answer: "Ordinary people are ignorant, while the followers of the two vehicle are prone to attachments. The forsaking of these two defects is called true cultivation. As to true cultivation, one should not exert oneself, nor should one try to forget things. Exertion leads to attachment, while forgetting leads to sinking into a state of oblivious ignorance. These are the essential principles of mind [cultivation]."[29]

In each of the above paragraphs, Weikuan comes across as a rather conservative monk. That is also characteristic of the other disciples of Mazu who taught in the capitals. In the first paragraph, he blurs the distinctions between the various aspects of Buddhist practice and the types of monks who represent them—specialists in doctrine, monastic discipline,

[28] The same idea is expressed in one of Mazu's sermons. See Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 63.

[29] *Boshi changqing ji* 白氏長慶集, 24.13a-b; translation adapted in part from Cheng-chien, *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 36–37, and Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 199–200. Similar version of the conversation appears in CTL 7.127. See also Arthur Waley, *The Life and*

and contemplative practice (i.e. Chan)—and points to the essential unity of all elements that constitute the Buddhist path. In the other three paragraphs, his views about spiritual practice are presented in an idiom that is familiar from other early records about the teachings of the Hongzhou School. Articulated in a restrained and somewhat conventional manner, Weikuan's responses to Bo's queries deal with such standard doctrinal and contemplative issues as the mind's innate purity, the perfection of mental detachment, and the safeguarding of an awakened state of numinous awareness.

In the course of his thriving teaching career in Changan, Weikuan used his influence to advance the status of the Hongzhou School, and to enhance the status of his teacher as a great leader of the Chan movement. It is quite probable that Xianzong's bestowal of a honorary posthumous title upon Mazu during the Yuanhe era (806–821)—the very period when Weikuan's prestige in Changan was at its peak—was either directly or indirectly influenced by Weikuan and the other disciples who were active in Changan. Furthermore, in 815, together with Huaihui, Weikuan commissioned a memorial stupa and a stele inscription for Mazu's teacher Huairang. At the time, Huairang was for the most part still an obscure figure whose life was not well documented.[30] The inscription, entitled *Hengzhou Boresi Guanyin dashi beiming bingxu* 衡州般若寺觀音大師碑銘并序, was composed by Zhang Zhengfu 張正甫, and is the earliest extant source about

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*Times of Po Chü-i*, p. 99. In addition to Bo's record of his conversation with Weikuan, the only other account of Weikuan's teachings is a sermon recorded in ZJL 98, T 48.942b-c.

[30] There is a slight confusion about the dating of the inscription. The QTW edition states that the inscription was composed in the eighteenth year of the Yuanhe era (806–820), which is probably a misprint as that era did not last eighteen years. The *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 edition of the inscription has the "tenth year of the Yuanhe era" instead, which as suggested by Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 11, is probably the correct reading. The commissioning of the inscription by Weikuan and Huiahui is clearly stated at the beginning of the text.

Huairang's life.[31] As the commissioning of the inscription and the bestowal of Mazu's official title occurred around the same time, they could both be seen as part of a concerted effort on part of Weikuan and Huaihui to ensure official recognition for Mazu and the Hongzhou School, or as normal consequence of the influence and status in the religious life of Changan the two of them achieved . Not surprisingly, Weikuan and Huaihui were themselves recipients of official recognition. They were both promptly granted posthumous titles the very year each of them died. Those disciples of Mazu who remained in the south also acknowledged Weikuan's success in the capital, and it is apparent that Weikuan was widely perceived as one of Mazu's most influential disciples. His high standing within the Hongzhou School during the 810s is clearly evident in Xitang's memorial inscription, which presents Xitang and Weikuan as Mazu's two main disciples whose teachings flourished in the South and the North, respectively.[32]

***Huaihui***. Together with Weikuan, Huaihui was the most influential disciple of Mazu in the capital.[33] There are many parallels in the lives of the two monks: they were

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[31] QTW 619.2767b-c, *Tang wenzui* 唐文粹 62.5b–6b, and *Fozu lidai tongzai*, T 49.595c–96a (the last version omits the closing verse section). Weikuan and Huaihui figure prominently in Huairang's biography in SGSZ 9, T 50.761a-b, but the account presented there is somewhat confused and makes no mention of their commissioning of the inscription, which is mistakenly attributed to Guideng 歸登.

[32] See the inscription in Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," p. 281, as well as the pertinent discussion in Chapter Five.

[33] The main biographical source about his life and monastic career is his stele inscription, *Tang Zhangjingsi Baiyan dashi beiming bingxu* 唐章敬寺百巖大師碑銘并序. The inscription was composed by Quan Deyu, who also wrote Mazu's inscription. This inscription is preserved in the following two collections: QTW 501.2260b–c, and WYYH 866.4568a-b. Additional sources are his biographies in SGSZ 10, T 50.767c–68a, CDL 7.120–21, and ZTJ 325–26. Apparently there was another inscription composed by the poet Jia Dao (779–843), which is no longer extant, but is mentioned in the SGSZ and ZTJ biographies. Basing himself on a reference in *Minzhong jinshi zhi* 閩中金石志 1, which states that Jia Dao wrote down the inscription composed by Quan, Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshūshi*, pp. 374–75, suggests that it is probable that there was only one inscription. However, the differences between the SGSZ biography and Quan's inscription, together with the fact that the

of approximately the same age, they joined Mazu at roughly the same time, and after Mazu's death they both embarked on unsettled, peripatetic life. Moreover, the dates of their entry into Changan were only one year apart, as was the time of their deaths.

One-year Weikuan's junior, Huaihui was born in 755 in Quanzhou 泉州 (in present-day Fujian) as a member of the Xie family.[34] There is no information about his early life, or his entry into the monastic order. He joined Mazu in 785, just three years before Mazu's death, and was thus among the last disciples who came to study with Mazu. After leaving Hongzhou sometime after Mazu's burial, during the following two decades Huaihui stayed at a number of different locations: first in Jiangxu, then further north in Shandong, and finally in Hebei.[35] At the last locale, he stayed at Baiyan monastery 百巖寺 in Dingzhou 定州. Though Huaihui might have started teaching before his arrival there, it was at Baiyan that he first attracted a larger number of disciples and became a popular teacher.[36] According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the constant requests for instructions from his students, whose number was gradually becoming larger and larger, eventually became bothersome for Huaihui. That led him to

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SGSZ biography makes mention only of Jia's inscription, clearly suggests that there were two different inscriptions, and Zanning probably used only the one composed by Jia when he wrote Huaihui's biography in SGSZ.

[34] There is discrepancy between his dates presented in his stele inscription and the SGSZ biography on one side, and the CDL and ZTJ biographies on the other. According to the last two texts, the year of his death was 818 instead of 816. That is probably a mistake. See discussion of this issue in Ishii, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite," IBK 40/1 (1991), pp. 282–83. However, note that Ishii mistakenly gives the year of Huaihui's death as 815, probably erring in the conversion of the date of his death, which was in January of 816, into the Western calendar.

[35] See SGSZ 10, T 50.767c–68a, and Du Jiwen 杜繼文 and Wei Daoru 魏道儒, *Zhongguo chanzong tongshi* 中國禪宗通史, p. 236.

[36] Huaihui became closely associated with Baiyan monastery. That can be seen in his inscription, in whose title he is referred as the "the great teacher of Baiyan [monastery]." In the same text, Quan Deyu also notes that during his life Huaihui was commonly referred to as Baiyan.

seek the solitude of Zhongtiao mountain 中條山 (located on the border of Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces), where he engaged in the practice of meditation.

In 808 Emperor Xianzong invited Huaihui, who was fifty-two years old at the time, to come to teach at the capital. After his arrival, Huaihui settled at the Vairocana cloister of Zhangjing monastery, which was established by Daizong in 767 to commemorate his deceased mother. Located outside of the city walls, in the area close to the eastern city walls outside of the Tonghua gate, Zhangjing was one of capital's leading monasteries.[37] Before long, Huaihui became a popular teacher in the capital. He instructed many monastic and lay students about the "essentials of Chan" (*chanyao* 禪要), and numerous "imperial officials and famous scholars came daily to ask for his instructions."[38] Like Dayi and Weikuan, he was also invited to lecture and engage in public debate at the Linde Hall, as well as to participate in vegetarian banquets for monks during which he was treated as a guest of honor.[39]

Huaihui's successful teaching career in Changan ended with his death on January 14, 816, which followed a short illness he contracted during the cold Changan winter. Soon afterwards he received from the emperor the posthumous title Chan teacher Daxuanjiao 大宣教,[40] and Quan Deyu and Jia Dao wrote his memorial inscriptions. Among his disciples, the most influential were Hyŏnuk and Hongbian 弘辯 (781–865).

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[37] For the establishment of this monastery, see *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 224.7195–96, and the biography of Yu Chaoen 魚朝恩 (d. 770), the influential eunuch who donated the estate on which the monastery was built, in JTS 184.4764. For further references and information about this monastery, see also Ono, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: shiryō hen*, pp. 327–32, Idem, *Chōan jiin shiryō shūsei: kaisetsu hen*, pp. 112–14, as well as Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 83–84.

[38] SGSZ 10, T 50.768a.

[39] WYYH 866.4568a, and SGSZ 10, T 50.768a.

[40] SGSZ 10, T 50.768a.

Hyŏnuk was a Korean monk who after his return to his native land established a thriving monastic community at Pongnim-san, and later came to be recognized as the "founder" of one of the nine schools of Silla Sŏn.[41] Following in the footsteps of his teacher, Hongbian also taught in the capital from his base at Jianfu monastery 薦福寺, in the very center of Changan. It appears that Hongbian, who like Huaihui also offered religious instructions to emperor Xianzong, was a quite successful teacher whose active role in Changan's religious scene insured Hongzhou School's continuous presence in the capital following the deaths of Weikuan and Huaihui.[42]

**Views of the Chan Movement**

Dayi's stele inscription presents a concise outline of the main Chan lineages recognized during the early ninth century that is characterized by an evident sense of ecumenism. The inscription takes for granted the description of Huineng as the sixth Chan patriarch. At the same time, its author—who almost certainly was conveying views that were held by Dayi and his disciples—also asserts that there were four main Chan lineages. The four Chan lineages described by him are the same ones that appear in Zongmi's *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu*: the lineages of Shenxiu and Shenhui in the North, and of Farong and Mazu in the South. As the same four lineages appear in other sources composed in the two capitals during the same period, such as Weikuan's inscription discussed below, it

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[41] For his brief biography see ZTJ 17.374–75.

[42] A series of questions posed by Xianzong accompanied by Hongbian's answers are recorded in his biography in CDL 9.159. It is interesting to note that on the first question, concerning the Northern and Southern Schools of Chan, Hongbian's answer consists of a pseudo-historical summary of Chan's early genealogical history that is very much in tune with the orthodox view that is found in later Chan chronicles such as CDL and ZTJ.

seems that during the early ninth century they were widely recognized as the main branches of the Chan tradition.

It is interesting to note that, in keeping with its ecumenical perspective, the text of Dayi's inscription also expresses a critical attitude towards the sectarian divisions caused by the putative infighting between the Northern and Southern schools about the orthodox transmission of Chan (which in reality was more one-sided attack on part of Shenhui, directed towards his main competitors for the position of "orthodox" representative of Chan in the North). Though it is fairly clear towards whom the criticism was directed, the text places the blame for the misguided sectarian infighting on the disciples of Shenhui, rather than on the most likely culprit, Shenhui himself. The section where these issues are discussed, which appears at the very beginning of the inscription, follows:

> The "transformation bodies" (*yingshen* 應身, Skt. *sambhogakāya*) [of the Buddha] are limitless in number, and one of them descended in India. There were six Chan patriarchs [in China], three of whom lived during the sagely reign of the Tang dynasty. During the reign of emperor Gaozu, there was Daoxin under whose leadership the Chan School prospered. During the reign of emperor Taizong, there was Hongren, who revealed the original pearl [of awakening?]. During the reign of Gaozong there was Huineng, whose fish trap was like a finger pointing to the moon [i.e. he propounded expedient teachings that led to enlightenment]. After that, the main [Chan] lineage was divided into various branches: some retired to Qin 秦 (i.e. the area of present-day Shaanxi province, where the Tang capital Changan was located), some settled in Luo 洛 (i.e. the area around Tang's secondary capital Luoyang), some moved on to Wu 吳 (i.e. the area around present-day Shanghai in the lower Yangtze delta), and some went to reside in Chu 楚 (i.e. the area of present-day Hunan and Hubei provinces). The [monk active in] Qin was called [Shen]xiu. By means of expedient methods (*fangbian* 方便) he revealed [the truth of Buddhism?]. Puji was his faithful follower. The [monk active in] Luo was called [Shen]hui; he attained the seal of *dhāranī* (*zongchi* 總持) and singularly glistened on the bright pearl. His disciples were confused about the truth, and thus they mixed things up and somewhat unexpectedly construed the transmission of the Chan teaching as presented in the *Platform Scripture*, which [purports to] explicate the good and bad [Chan lineages and teachings]. The [monk active in] Wu was called [Fa]rong, who was also known as Niutou [from the name of the mountain where he resided]. Jingshan was his spiritual

> descendant. The [monk active in] Chu was called Daoyi (i.e. Mazu). He absorbed everything by means of the Great Vehicle (Mahayana). The great teacher (i.e. Dayi) belonged to his faction.[43]

The above depiction of Huineng as the sixth patriarch should be read as an acknowledgment of his firmly established status as such during the early ninth century, which is corroborated by other documents from the same period. Despite the recognition of Huineng as the main disciple of Hongren, however, the inscription also presents two other main Chan lineages that were independent of him, those of Farong and Shenxiu, as equally authentic branches of the Chan tradition. There is of course an implicit contradiction between the contention that Huineng was the sixth patriarch and the acknowledgement of Shenxiu's lineage as orthodox. That can also be seen in the claim that the division into various Chan lineages occurred after Huineng, even though the "founders" of two of those lineages (Farong and Shenxiu) were Huineng's seniors. Even so, the above description of the main Chan lineages exudes a sense of broad-mindedness, and displays the kind of ecumenical attitude that is in evidence in other records from the same period.

In the above passage from Dayi's inscription, there is no explicit assertion that the lineage of Huineng and Mazu, to which Dayi belonged, was superior to the other Chan lineages. Quite to the contrary, the inscription is critical of the efforts on part of Shenhui's disciples to judge the "good and bad" (i.e. orthodox and heterodox) lineages, which apparently led to the inclusion of biased sectarian statements in the *Platform Scripture*, the main document that propounded the religious orthodoxy of Huineng's "Southern

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[43] QTW 715.3258a.

School" and the soteriological superiority of its teachings.[44] The inscription also offers the following more explicit criticism of Shenhui's and his cohorts' attempts to engender sectarian divisions between the Northern and Southern schools of Chan:

> From that time onwards they [i.e. the followers of Shenhui] were confused about their direction and impeded in their tracks. [Views about] right and wrong arose one after another, and there was no end to [their attachment to] things and self. It is asserted that as the Southern School is orthodox and the Northern School is heterodox, and that the Northern School [holds on to] existence, while the Southern School [follows the doctrine] of emptiness. Yet, they do not know that when the [true] mind is engendered [as taught by] the Southern School, that itself is the same as the Northern School, and when views are extinguished [as taught by] the Northern School, then that intersects with the Southern School.[45]

The above rejection of drawing sharp distinctions between the Northern and Southern schools of Chan of the kind that were first propounded by Shenhui and his followers echoes the famous statement in Shitou's *Cantongqi* 參同契, "though people's faculties might be sharp or dull, in the Way [to Buddhahood] there are no southern or northern patriarchs."[46] The ecumenical attitude evidenced in the inscription is in accord with what we know about the lack of a strong sense of sectarianism among Mazu's disciples. As we saw in Chapter Four, Mazu respectfully acknowledged other noted Chan teachers who were his contemporaries, and initiated friendly exchanges with them.

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[44] It is not clear why the author blames Shenhui's ignorant disciples, none of whom is mentioned by name, but makes no direct mention of Shenhui's sectarian transgressions, even though it seems fairly obvious that the main object of the criticism was Shenhui. It could be that at the time the inscription was written, Shenhui was still widely regarded as an influential figure, and direct criticism of him could elicit unwelcome repercussions. But it could also be the case that Shenhui's disciples were indeed behind many of the virulent attacks against the Northern School. If that was the case, we need to reevaluate the history of Shenhui's anti-Northern School campaign, and critically re-examine the provenance of all pertinent sources.

[45] QTW 715.3258a.

[46] CDL 30.631.

Dayi's stele inscription reveals an unmistakable concern with spiritual lineage, which seems to have been a more important issue in the religious milieu of the Tang capital than it was in the provinces. But the inscription also shows that Mazu's disciples were sharply critical of the anti-Northern School campaign started by Shenhui. Its condemnation of Shenhui's and his faction's brazenly self-serving sectarian crusade indicates that Mazu's disciples adopted a tolerant attitude towards the rest of the Chan movement that was similar to that of their teacher.

Like Dayi's inscription, Bo's inscription for Weikuan also provides an account of the main traditions of Chan. Bo lists the same four main Chan lineages: those of Mazu, Shenhui, Farong, and Shenxiu. Furthermore, Weikuan's inscription also includes a genealogical outline of the whole Chan lineage up to Weikuan. This lineage is rather unusual because it is based on a genealogical chart that is at variance with the one that at the time was becoming accepted as the orthodox one.[47] Unlike the most prevalent theory of twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs (Bodhidharma being the twenty-eight Indian and first Chinese patriarch)—which was first established by *Baolin zhuan* just over a decade before—Bo's inscription presents a different line of transmission according to which Bodhidharma was the fifty-first patriarch and Weikuan the fifty-ninth.

The conspicuous presence of genealogical discourse in the inscriptions composed for Chan monks active in the capitals indicates that concern with spiritual pedigree and

[47] This idiosyncrasy was first pointed out by in 1928 by Hu Shi 胡適 in his "Bo Juyi shidaide chanzong shixi" 白居易時代的禪宗世系, reprinted in Huang Xianian 黄夏年, ed., *Hu Shi ji* 胡適集, pp. 36–39. As first Hu, and later Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 396, pointed out, this lineage chart was based on the transmission lineage given in Sengyou's 僧祐 (445–518) *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 12, T 55.90a. The reasons for Bo's choice of this lineage is not clear. Even though the BLZ's mythic account of the transmission of Chan was accepted as orthodox by the later tradition, Bo's inscription indicates that during the early eight century the situation was quite fluid, and there still were a few competing accounts about the exact lineage chart of the Chan School.

orthodoxy was strong in the capitals. That was a period when lineage construction was already one of the central issues for the Chan movement as a whole, as well as for the other traditions of Chinese Buddhism.[48]

### Ruman and Chan in Luoyang

While Dayi, Weikuan, and Huaihui were popularizing the Chan teachings in Changan, the best-known representative of the Hongzhou School in Luoyang, the second Tang capital, was Ruman.[49] Ruman's life not well documented, but it is fortunate that what little information remains, for the most part it deals with the main issue that concerns us here, his activities in Luoyang. All we know about Ruman's early life is that his family's surname was Lu 陸. Ruman joined Mazu's monastery in Hongzhou, and later (probably after Mazu's death) he moved north. Eventually he went to reside at Jinge monastery 金閣寺 on Wutai mountain. It appears that he visited Changan in 805, when he supposedly offered religious instructions to the ailing emperor Shunzong. A conversation between the emperor and Ruman, recorded in *Chuandeng lu*, includes the following passage.

> Shunzong asked, "Where did the Buddha come from? Whence did he go after his passing away? As it is said that he constantly dwells in the world, where is the Buddha right now?"
>
> Ruman said, "The Buddha comes from the unconditioned (*wuwei* 無爲), and after his passing away he goes back to the unconditioned. The dharma body is

[48] The Tiantai School's efforts to construct its own religious genealogy during the eight and ninth centuries, which to a substantial degree were a response to similar efforts on part of Chan, are discussed in Penkower, "T'ian-t'ai During the T'ang Dynasty," pp. 220–299.

[49] The earliest biographical source about him is the brief *Foguang heshang zhenzan bingxu* 佛光和尚眞讚并序, QTW 677.3054c, which was composed by Bo Juyi shortly after Ruman's death. I suspect that the extant text in QTW is only a fragment of the whole composition. An additional source is his short biography in CDL 6.112, which almost entirely consists of a record of conversation between him and Emperor Shunzong. The rest of the information about Ruman comes from scattered references in the writings of Bo Juyi.

like empty space—it is constantly present when there is no mind (*wuxin* 無心). When there is thought, it returns to no thought (*wunian* 無念), and when there is abode, it returns to no abode (*wuzhu* 無住). When coming, he comes for the sake of living beings, and when leaving he leaves for the sake of living beings. The pure ocean of suchness (*zhenru* 真如) is transparent and its essence abides forever. The wise ones think about it thoughtfully, and then do not give rise to any doubts about it.[50]

As was the case with Weikuan's quotation presented above, in this passage Ruman appears as a fairly mainstream exponent of Mahayana doctrine. Though he uses such popular Chan terms as *wunian* and *wuxin*, his ideas are very much in accord with widely-accepted views about the nature of Buddhahood that were in no way unique to the Chan School.

It is not clear when Ruman arrived in Luoyang, nor do we know about the circumstances that led him to move there.[51] It is possible that after his sojourn in Changan, Ruman proceeded directly to the eastern capital, but that is no more than an educated guess. It does appear that in contrast to Weikuan and Huaihui, Ruman was more inclined towards a quiet, contemplative lifestyle, and was less interested (or perhaps less able) in establishing the kinds of ties with powerful figures that were one of the reasons for the success of the other two monks in Changan. After his arrival in Luoyang, Ruman met his best-known disciple, the celebrated poet Bo Juyi.[52] The relationship with Bo is by

[50] CDL 6.112. Considering the late date of the text where this conversation is recorded, there are doubts about its authenticity. At the same time, its contents and idiom are similar to those of other similar records composed during that time, and it might as well be a record of actual conversation between Shunzong and Ruman.

[51] According to "Henglongsi ji" 衡龍寺記, in *Hunan tongzhi* 239, Ruman established Henglong monastery, located in Hengzhou 衡州 (Hunan) during the Zheyuan era (785–805). However, this record, composed in 1075, is quite late and is not a reliable evidence to prove that following Mazu's death Ruman was active in Hunan. At the same time, it is also possible that the information might be correct. See discussion in Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 45.

[52] Bo is the only disciple of Ruman about whom we have any information.

far the best-documented part of Ruman's life, and it was Bo who was mainly responsible for what little information we have about Ruman's life and religious activities.

From a record of Bo's donation of a collection of his works to Shengshan monastery 聖善寺 in 836, we learn that at an earlier date Bo received religious instructions from Ruman at the same monastery.[53] Ruman spent his final years at Xiangshan monastery 香山寺 in Luoyang. In 842 he and Bo, who had already retired with the title of minister in the ministry of justice, founded the "Incense Fellowship." This was a period during which Bo was most fervent in his practice of Buddhism. At the time, Bo adopted a semi-monastic lifestyle and spent a substantial part of his time in religious practice, including Chan meditation. He also wore the white robes of a Buddhist layman and referred to himself as the "Layman from Xiangshan," which was a reference to the monastery where Ruman resided.[54]

Ruman died and was subsequently buried at Xiangshan. The exact time of his death is uncertain, but he probably died during (or close to) 842. Bo soon followed him, and upon his explicit request—made to his family shortly before his death—he was also buried at Xiangshan, next to Ruman's memorial pagoda.[55]

***Other disciples active in the capitals***. Although Dayi, Weikuan, Huaihui, and Ruman were the best-known disciples of Mazu to teach in Changan and Luoyang, there were not the only ones. Other disciples who were active in Changan and about whom

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[53] *Boshi changqing ji* 61.22a-b.

[54] JTS 166.4356, and Eugene Feifel, trans., "Biography of Po Chü-i—Annotated translation from *chüan* 166 of the *Chiu T'ang-shu*," *Monumenta Serica* 17 (1958), p. 305.

[55] JTS 166.4358, and Feifel, "Biography of Po Chü-i," p. 310. It is also interesting to note that Bo Juyi is accorded a short biography in CDL 10.185, where he is presented as the only disciple of Ruman who received Ruman's dharma transmission.

there is extant biographical information were Huayan Zhizang 華嚴智藏, Haozhi 好直 (who, like Weikuan, also resided at Anguo monastery), Caotang 草堂, and Xingping 興平.[56] In addition, *Chuandeng lu* also lists the name of the following disciples of Mazu who were active in Changan, but about whom there is no additional information: Huaitao 懷韜, Jueping 覺平 of Xiantong monastery 咸通寺, and Fuchong 府崇.[57] With regard to Luoyang, besides Ruman, other disciples active there included Funiu Zizai 伏牛自在, Danxia, and Heijian 黑澗.[58]

## Concluding Remarks

The disciples of Mazu who carried the teachings of the Hongzhou School to the two Tang capitals played an instrumental role in the emergence of the Hongzhou School as the main Chan tradition during the early ninth century. Their role in enhancing their tradition's fortunes by carrying its religious message beyond the provincial world of southern China had two complimentary ramifications, each of which had lasting impact on the development of Chan as the main elite tradition of Chinese Buddhism. First, through their proselytizing activities, these monks disseminated the teachings of the Hongzhou School to a wider and more cosmopolitan audience. In the process of doing that, they also fostered the further enhancement of Mazu's aura as a crucial patriarchal figure in the history of the Chan School. In addition, through their ability to establish close ties with powerful individuals—including the emperors Dezong, Shunzong, and

[56] For Huayan, see his biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.775c; for Haozhi see his biography in SGSZ 30, T 50.894c–95a; for Caotang see his brief entry in CDL 8.143; and for Xingping see CDL 8.144 and ZTJ 20.453–54.

[57] See CDL 6.104, 7.118, 8.131.

[58] For Funiu, see SGSZ 11, T 50. 771c–72a, CDL 7.122, and ZTJ 15.329–30. Regarding Heijian, there are only the two brief biographical references in CDL 8.144 and ZTJ 15.347.

Xianzong, as well as scores of powerful officials in the central bureaucracy—they elicited official recognition of their tradition. Such official sanction and support facilitated the Hongzhou School's further integration into the mainstream of the Buddhist church.

Official recognition and backing from the imperial government still counted a great deal during the early ninth century. They offered the kind of formal veneer of legitimacy that no other source could provide. That was of course not a substitute for religious vitality and institutional vigor. Nonetheless, in broader social terms, official support certainly did a great deal to enhance both the secular and the religious fortunes of the Hongzhou School. By the early ninth century, the Hongzhou School had already planted firm roots as a loosely organized but nonetheless distinct tradition of Chinese Buddhism that was widely perceived as the main representative of the burgeoning Chan movement. In that manner, within a generation, the Hongzhou School developed from a monastic community centered in Mazu's monastery in Jiangxi to a truly national movement, which had vibrant monastic centers scattered throughout most parts of the Tang empire. That laid the foundation for the establishment of a new Chan orthodoxy, in which the so-called Southern School of Chan, of which its putative originator Huineng and its actual founder Mazu were the main representatives, eclipsed the diverse traditions of early Chan.

Chapter 7

# *Formation of the Hongzhou School's Religious Doctrines*

This chapter, together with Chapter Eight, examines the central religious doctrines propounded by Mazu and the disciples who emerged as leaders of the Hongzhou school. My approach to the subject-matter will be thematic, namely I will identify and examine the main topics and issues broached in those extant sources that contain discussions of doctrinal issues. In the course of my analysis, I will try to uncover the inner coherence of the Hongzhou school's theoretical stances and applied approaches to Buddhist soteriology, as well as draw attention to the points of tension that arose from juxtaposing divergent religious ideas culled from different doctrinal frames of reference.

My inquiry into Chan doctrines begins with a broad overview of the Buddhist doctrinal traditions that flourished during the mid-Tang period. Contrary to popular perceptions about the anti-intellectual and anti-doctrinal predilections of the classical Chan tradition, the pertinent documents indicate that the principal theories of mainstream Sinitic Mahayana Buddhism were conspicuously reflected in the Hongzhou School's teachings. Such mainstream doctrines provided the theoretical backdrop against which Mazu and his followers developed their more "practically-oriented" approach to spiritual life.[1] The survey of the broader doctrinal background will be followed by an examination

[1] The purportedly sharp contrast between Chan's vital and "practically-oriented" approach to spiritual life on the one hand, and the formulaic approaches adopted by the rest of Buddhism on the other, is very much a part of the biased representations that are characteristic of normative Chan/Zen apologetics. Though I do not accept the sectarian biases and historical misrepresentations that often

of the Hongzhou School's attitudes towards the Buddhist scriptures and its use of them, which echoed significant broader changes in the ways of thinking about the authority of canonical traditions. The emergence of such new outlooks towards established and officially-sanctioned traditions, be they religious or otherwise, was one of the characteristics of the intellectual and social milieus that emerged during the first few decades after the end of the An Lushan rebellion. The chapter will end with a brief discussion of the Hongzhou School's understanding of the nature and function of religious teachings. Using the traditional notion of *upāya*, Mazu and his disciples stressed the performative function of Buddhist doctrines as sets of guiding principles that were meant to be employed in the actual course of religious practice.

### Note on the Sources

As pointed out in Chapter One, the study of Tang dynasty Chan is constrained and demarcated by the nature of the available sources, as well as by the manner in which those sources are utilized and by the hermeneutical strategies that are employed by the present-day researcher who tries to make sense of the medieval materials. Following the criteria about the use of relevant textual sources introduced in Chapters One and Two, the present examination of Chan doctrine will be based on those texts (or parts/sections of larger texts) that have mid-Tang provenance and can be linked to the main figures who represented the Hongzhou School with a reasonable degree of certainty. For the period we are concerned with here, the main documents that deal with Chan doctrines and meet those criteria are Mazu's sermons, Dazhu's *Dunwu yaomen*, and Baizhang's *Baizhang*

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underlie such views, I also feel that the Hongzhou School articulated a vision of the path that did show strong concern for actual practice.

*guanglu*.[2] To this we can also add some of the sermons of Mazu's disciples that are preserved in Five Dynasties and early Song compilations. If one were to extend the discussion to cover the Hongzhou School's third generation, another extremely valuable source is *Chuanxin fayao*, the record of Huangbo's lectures compiled by Pei Xiu.[3]

Mazu's sermons are of course of crucial importance for the study of mid-Tang Chan doctrine. Unfortunately, taken by themselves they are not an adequate source for presenting a reasonably comprehensive overview even of his own teachings, let alone for those of the whole Hongzhou School. Although Mazu's sermons are the first to introduce several important catchphrases, and they also put forward many of the main religious

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[2] The present edition of Dazhu's text was published in 1374 as the first part of *Dunwu yaomen* 頓悟要門 (The Essential Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment). The second part of this work consists of materials about Dazhu taken from the *Chuandeng lu*. There is also a separate, earlier manuscript in the possession of Kanazawa Bunko 金澤文庫, Japan. Though the extant editions of this text are relatively late, its contents are undoubtedly quite old, as indicated by the following evidence. First, although Dazhu's text follows a question-and-answer format, it is obviously a literary creation, as the character *lun* 論 (treatise) in the title indicates. As it was already mentioned, this format is familiar from earlier, pre-Hongzhou Chan texts, such as *Xiuxin yaolun* 修心要論 (Treatise on the Essentials of Mind Cultivation), and is also a format found in many non-Chan texts (see Chapter Two). Another feature that indicates the old age of the text is the laudatory verse which opens the treatise, also a characteristic of early Chan texts. Moreover, much of the Chan vocabulary that appears in the treatise consists of phrases that were in vogue during Shenhui's time, such as "non-created mind" (*wusheng xin* 無生心) and "non-dwelling mind" (*wuzhu xin* 無住心). See Hirano, trans., *Tongo yōmon*, p. 219, and Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 239. The texts also show some direct influences from the records of Shenhui, which were in circulation at the time of its composition. This evidence also helps us to roughly estimate the date of the text's composition, which probably took place between Shenhui's death in 762 and Mazu's death in 788. See Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, pp. 359–63. Further indication about text's early origins are the quotations from such early sūtras like *Chanmen jing* 禪門經, *Foshuo fajujing* 佛說法句經, and *Fangkuang jing* 方廣經, which are only preserved among the Dunhuang documents.

[3] I will not make much use of this important text because of this study's focus on Mazu and his first-generation disciples. However, I need to point out that for the most part Huangbo's record is in general agreement with the other sources examined here, even though he often employs more radical rhetoric, and dwells on a few concepts that are not commonly discussed in the records of other Hongzhou Chan figures, such as "no-mind" and "one mind."

themes and doctrinal orientations that typify the Hongzhou movement, they are very brief. Thus, due to their limited scope, Mazu's sermons do not provide adequate information about the broader picture I am concerned with here. Moreover, I plan to deal with Mazu's records in greater detail in a separate study. For these reasons, although I will make use of Mazu's sermons, my main source for the study of the Hongzhou School's doctrines will be *Baizhang guanglu*. Baizhang's record is an excellent source that provides the most comprehensive statement of Chan doctrine dating from the mid-Tang period. Moreover, it presents the views of one of the main leaders of the Hongzhou School, articulated in a Chan idiom that was prevalent during the early ninth century. Because of its broad scope and its more structured treatment of Chan doctrines, Baizhang's record comes closest to expressing the breadth and texture of the Hongzhou School's reformulation of the Buddhist path to spiritual awakening.

My decision to place greater emphasis on a single text is predicated on the notion that all available sources about the Hongzhou School's doctrine point to the presence of a common vision of a path of spiritual practice that was shared by Mazu and his main disciples. It is true that among Mazu's disciples there were many creative individuals who did not shy away from propounding novel ideas, even if at times that seemed to contradict some of their great teacher's earlier statements. Nonetheless, all the different viewpoints propounded by these monks were subsumed into a broader vision of the Chan path to awakening that was remarkable in the internal consistency of its religious values and insights, and the intellectual frames of references that informed it. Thus, although some of the details of Baizhang's presentation of Chan might not have been espoused by other

disciples of Mazu, in its general orientation and in the tenor of its arguments, *Baizhang guanglu* captures the essence of the Hongzhou movement better than any other text.[4]

The decision about the use of my main sources was motivated by conviction that the primary texts should be allowed to speak with their own voice. By focusing on a single text, instead of picking and choosing passages from different texts, I hope to have been able to diminish the natural tendency by which a modern scholar's views and predilections interfere with his/her presentation of medieval religious doctrines. Furthermore, my decision to place greater emphasis on Baizhang's singular vision of the Chan path is also premised on the notion that such an approach can best capture the inner coherence of that vision. Such a focus evades the propensity to selectively fit elements of medieval systems of though and practice into predetermined conceptual grids that have more to do with contemporary intellectual concerns and fads, than with the medieval ideas about religious life with which we are here concerned. That does not mean that critical theory cannot be used in ways that shed light on specific phenomena pertinent to

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[4] The text is included in *Guzunsu yulu*, XZJ 118.82–90. See also additional sections in XZJ 119.411a-b. Confirmation of the compilation of Baizhang's *yuben* can be found in his stele inscription, which was written by Zhen Xu shortly after his passing away (see Chapter Five). The identity and the contents of the original *yuben* are difficult to establish, but a text entitled *Baizhangshan heshang yaojue* 百丈山和尚要決 (The Essential Teachings of the Reverent from Baizhangshan) is listed in Enchin's (814–891) catalogues of texts brought to Japan from China. See T 55.1095a, T 55.1101a, T 55.1106c, and Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts," pp. 191–92. This text, which at the latest would have been compiled within few decades of Baizhang's death, was probably an early version of the extant BGL. Though there is no conclusive historical evidence to confirm that BGL is a different edition of the same text mentioned by Enchin, comparison of its contents, language, use of technical terminology, and literary format with those of other similar Tang texts, such as Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao* and Dazhu's *Dunwuyao yaomen lun*, do suggest that it is a product of the ninth century. Though most of the text consists of transcripts of sermons and discussions about Buddhist doctrine between Baizhang and his students, it is also possible that parts of the text were actually written by him. There are contemporary records that state that in response to a request from a Vinaya master Baizhang wrote letter(s) in which he offered instructions about the existence of Buddha nature. It is possible that some of Baizhang's letters were included of his record. See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 546.

the history of Chan, but in the present context I feel that it is more fruitful to focus on what the extant sources have to say.

Another reason for my choice to focus on Baizhang's record is the quiet neglect it has received from modern scholarship. That kind of disregard is a prime example of the deplorable tendency to ignore the earliest strata of textual materials about mid-Tang Chan because their contents contravene firmly-established views about classical Chan that are formulated and popularized by the Japanese Zen traditions, and are still accepted by modern scholarship. Despite its great historical importance as one of the most important Chan documents from the mid-Tang period, and the high esteem its author enjoys in the world of Japanese Zen, Baizhang's record has yet to be translated into the modern Japanese language,[5] and there has not been a single serious effort to analyze its contents.[6] Virtually all discussions about Baizhang and his place in Chan history are based on images and ideas presented in later Chan texts, most of which have little or nothing to do with Baizhang himself.[7] It is one of the great ironies of Chan studies that instead of studying the extant records of Baizhang's thought, Chan/Zen scholarship has

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[5] There is only an old Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering, published in 1927, in *Kokuyaku zenshū sōsho* 2/5, which is also reproduced in *Kokuyaku zengaku taisei*. Fortunately, there is an English translation which, though lacking an extensive critical scholarly apparatus, is on the whole reliable: Thomas Cleary, trans., *Sayings and Doings of Pai-chang*, pp. 27–82. In the following pages quotations from *Baizhang guanglu* are based, with minor modifications, on Cleary's translation, unless it is indicated otherwise.

[6] The only partial exception is Suzuki Tetsuo's brief article, "Hyakujō kōroku ni mirareru shisō," IBK 46/2 (1998), pp. 583–88. That compares very poorly with the treatment of most other seminal Chan text—especially popular Song text like *Biyan lu*, or records of sayings of popular Chan teachers that have sectarian significance in Japan, such as *Linji yulu*—which have been translated into Japanese (as well as English) a number of times, and subjected to numerous wide-ranging studies.

[7] An example of this tendency is the chapter on Baizhang in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 537–48. The bulk of Yanagida's discussion is an analysis of different versions of fictional dialogues

concentrated on imagining the contents of his non-existent work on Chan monastic rules, the so-called "Baizhang Rules of Purity."[8]

As pointed out by Suzuki Tetsuo, Baizhang's text is glossed over by contemporary Japanese scholarship in part because it is perceived as being "difficult" to read.[9] It seems, however, that the difficulty arises not so much because of the contents of the text (although understanding it does entail grounding in the Buddhist canonical traditions and familiarity with medieval Chinese Buddhist doctrines). Rather, the main problems arise because of its use of mid-Tang Chan idiom, and its presentation of ideas that are fundamentally different from the standard Chan fare found in later Song sources. Instead of portraying an iconoclastic Chan teacher familiar from popular Chan lore, an image we are especially used to associating with Baizhang, in its place *Baizhang guanglu* reveals a thoughtful monk who is eager to use his considerable learning and his familiarity with the Buddhist canonical traditions in order to develop a coherent vision of the path to spiritual awakening. It is even more interesting to discover that such a vision of Chan practice is infused with the kind of "gradualist" ideas that were supposedly expunged by the Southern School of Chan, as it established its orthodoxy in contrast to the supposedly heretical gradual teachings of the Northern School. Thus, the text is indeed difficult to interpret if it is not situated within its proper historical context, and if the reader is unwilling to question popular depictions of mid-Tang Chan that are based on later texts, and that are further refracted through the interlinked ideological presuppositions of the Japanese Zen's sectarian and scholarly traditions.

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between Mazu and Baizhang, from which he tries to extrapolate information about Baizhang's religious experiences.

[8] For a discussion of this topic, see Chapter Nine.

Because of my choice of sources and the manner in which I use and interpret them, the depiction of Hongzhou School's doctrines presented here will in major respects differ from views presented by other Chan/Zen scholars active in Japan and elsewhere. Here there will be no discussion of the iconoclastic "pedagogical methods" supposedly first developed by Mazu—such as beating, screaming, and strange verbal rumblings—that we are repeatedly told were (somehow) supposed to lead to religious awakening. In the same vein, there will be no unqualified support for the view that Hongzhou School's approach to Chan religiosity was characterized by strong anti-doctrinal or anti-intellectual stances. As I have already pointed out a few times in the preceding pages, such views are based on an uncritical acceptance of apocryphal iconoclastic Chan dialogues as being representative records of Hongzhou School's teachings and practices. Furthermore, I will also eschew the prevalent tendency to interpret Mazu's and his disciples' Chan in terms of later conceptual categories, such as the often-used "great function and great essence" paradigm. Since the use of the "great function and great essence" model was most probably an early Song period invention, its usage reflected a process of reinterpretation of Mazu's teachings that aimed to bring them in harmony with the increasingly *kanhua*-oriented outlook of the early Song tradition.[10]

## The Broader Doctrinal Background

When the Hongzhou School emerged on the Tang religious landscape, there already existed well-established Sinitic traditions of Buddhist doctrine and practice that had gradually evolved over the preceding six centuries. The basic problems associated with

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[9] Suzuki, "Hyakujō kōroku ni mirareru shisō," p. 583.

[10] See Ishikawa Rikisan, "Baso zō no henka katei," IBK 20/2 (1972), p. 806.

the initial Chinese attempts to understand the foreign ideas of Indian and Central Asian Buddhism, and to adapt its social mores and spiritual practices in ways that were acceptable to the Chinese cultural sensibilities, had for the most part already been worked out. By the early Tang period, the early plethora of diffuse Indian and Central Asian strains of Buddhism were becoming superseded by sophisticated Sinitic traditions of Mahayana Buddhism. Those traditions—the main representatives of which were such schools as Tiantai, Sanlun, and Huayan—developed novel doctrinal interpretations of the Buddhist dharma. The new Sinitic traditions were not only creative in their reconfiguration of traditional Mahayana Buddhist doctrines in ways that reflected native Chinese religious predilections and intellectual points of reference, but they were also willing to experiment with the creation of uniquely Chinese traditions of Buddhist philosophical discourse.

The Sinitic schools exhibited an increased tendency to engage in theoretical discussions about spiritual life and the nature of reality that as time went on were increasingly divested from Indian doctrinal formulations. At the same time, for the most part they also manifested the kind of firm grasp of the full range of Indian Buddhist doctrines that eluded the Chinese Buddhists who lived during the early stages of the transmission of Buddhism to China. Thus, when Mazu started to attract his early disciples around the middle of the eight-century, Chinese monks had access to a full range of well-assimilated and readily available Buddhist doctrines. Those doctrines were presented in numerous popular Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures and exegetical literature composed by Indian monks, which were supplemented (and in some instances supplanted) by the treatises of famous Chinese monks that explicated the uniquely Sinitic systematizations of Buddhist doctrines. But although the main doctrinal orientations of

Sinitic Buddhism were already evident by the early Tang period, Chinese schools like Tiantai and Huayan were still undergoing significant evolutionary transformations that coincided with the emergence and growth of the Hongzhou School.[11]

The early appropriation of the main doctrinal systems of Indian Buddhism—Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and Tathāgatagarbha—was a largely haphazard process that extended over a long period, and was accompanied by many linguistic and hermeneutical problems. As the Buddhist intellectuals were establishing the basic doctrinal orientations that for the most part have ever since defined Chinese (and by extension, East Asian) Buddhism, they needed to institute some sort of ordering in the variety of seemingly contradictory Indian doctrinal schemata. They also faced the challenge of interpreting such canonical teachings in a satisfactory manner, so that they could serve as foundations for new uniquely Sinitic forms of Buddhism doctrine. In a typically Chinese fashion, this process of sorting and organizing Buddhist doctrines—which for the most part was undertaken under the rubric of "classified teachings" (*panjiao* 判教)—was carried out in a presumably ecumenical spirit. Chinese scholars did not categorically reject any of the teachings of Indian Buddhism, but instead tried to create larger interpretative frameworks in which various teaching coexisted in a semblance of harmony, each forming a meaningful part in the whole body of Buddhist religious doctrine. At the same time, however, the relation between diverse doctrines was presented in an unmistakably hierarchical fashion. The doctrine championed by the author(s) of a particular taxonomic system was inevitably placed at the top, thus unambiguously indicating that it represented

[11] Mazu was a contemporary with the great Zhanran (711–782), who revived the sagging fortunes of the Tiantai school, while Xitang and Baizhang were contemporaries of Chengguan (738–839), the great Huayan exegete who posthumously came to be recognized as the fourth patriarch of the Huayan school.

the "perfect teaching" that fully encapsulated the essence of dharma's profound purport. Such hierarchical ordering of Buddhist doctrines did reflect Chinese intellectual predilections and religious sentiments, but it was also to some extent influenced by the ideological agendas that accompanied the emergence of such semi-independent traditions like Tiantai and Huayan.

One of the salient characteristics of Tang Buddhism that is clearly evident in the taxonomies of Buddhist doctrines that were influential during the early Tang period—such as Fazang's famous fivefold classification of the teachings of Buddhism—was the emergence of tathāgatagarbha doctrine as the theoretical mainstream of Chinese Buddhism. Though its place of prominence did not go unchallenged—and continued to be occasionally contested for a long time, as can be seen from the doctrinal disputes among different factions of the Tiantai School during the early Song period—for the most part from the Tang dynasty onward the tathāgatagarbha (together with the homologous Buddha-nature theory) became the main doctrinal stream of the majority of later Sinitic forms of Buddhism. Chan was of course very much a part of these developments.

As Robert Gimello has pointed out, Chinese Buddhist showed a preference for doctrines that reasserted the soteriological value of kataphasis (positive/affirmative use of language) over the seemingly relentless apophasis of the earlier Mādhyamika doctrine.[12] This shift towards the embrace of kataphatic modes of religious thought was exemplified in the Chinese predisposition—already evident in the sixth century, and becoming even more pronounced with the emergence of Huayan and Chan—to feel more comfortable with the tathāgatabarbha theory and its belief about the immanence of Budhahood in each

[12] Robert Gimello, "Apophatic and Kataphatic Discourse in Mahāyāna: A Chinese view," *Philosophy East and West* 26/2 (1976), p. 119.

person, despite the fact that it was a relatively late doctrinal position that was somewhat marginal in Indian Buddhism. In this doctrine Chinese Buddhists found a compelling theory that validated the ordinary world of phenomenal appearances and presented everyday reality as the arena where spiritual practice and realization took place.

A good example of the incipient tendency to move away from orthodox Mādhyamika interpretations of the Buddhist path—which were most influential during the early phases of the transmission of Buddhism to China—and to appropriate the tathāgatagarbha/ Buddha-nature theory is the doctrinal system developed by Jizang, the main representative of the Sanlun School. Though this school is usually taken to represent a Chinese version of the Mādhyamika School, and its doctrines are depicted as the main Chinese reformulation of the teaching of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), the unmistakable influence of Buddha-nature theory is conspicuous in Jizang writings. Indeed, it plays such a significant role that some of his modern critics have labeled him a proponent of *dhātu-vada*, a neologism that stands for the induction of a substantial, underlying basis of human existence of the kind that is repudiated by the traditional Buddhist doctrine of causality. They have thus asserted that Jizang's thought is not in accord with the orthodox Indian Mādhyamika interpretations of emptiness and conditioned origination.[13]

A similar propensity for the use of kataphatic discourse and appropriation of Buddha-nature theory is also evident in the Tiantai tradition, the other Chinese tradition formed during the pre-Tang period that could claim to be an intellectual heir of the

[13] See Matsumoto Shirō, "Sanron kyōgaku no hihanteki kōsatsu: *dhātu-vāda* to shite no Kichizō no shisō," in Hirai Shunei, ed., *Sanron kyōgaku no kenkyū*, pp. 193–222. For a broader discussion of "critical Buddhism," of which Matsumoto is one of the leading exponents, see James B. Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson, eds., *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism*.

Mādhyamika tradition.[14] As is to be expected, later traditions like Huayan, which relegated Madhyamika doctrine to lower positions in their taxonomies of the teachings of Buddhism, were even more wholehearted in their appropriation of tathāgatagarbha thought. This shift is clearly evident in works composed by the main exponents of the Huayan system, where the tathāgatagarbha theory serves as the basis for the elaborate doctrines that became hallmark of the Huayan School's religious philosophy.

Although ideas about mind's innate purity are expressed in some of the earliest Buddhist scriptures, the development of tathāgatagarbha doctrine occurred at a relatively late stage of the development of Indian Buddhism. Moreover, its influence in India was rather limited, and it never really came close to presenting a viable alternative to the better-established and more influential doctrinal systems of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. Tathāgatagarbha ideas figured prominently in some of the later Mahayana scriptures, such as the *Śrīmālādevī*, the *Huayan*, the *Lankāvatāra* (where they were integrated into text's Yogācāra perspective), and the *Mahāparinirvāna* scriptures. [15] The doctrine's meaning

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[14] For early Tiantai appropriations of the Buddha-nature theory, see Heng-ching Shih, "T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Theory of Buddha Nature—A Realistic and Humanistic Understanding of the Buddha," in Paul J. Griffiths and John P. Keenan, eds., *Buddha Nature: A Festschrift in Honor of Minoru Kiyota*, pp. 153–69, and Paul L. Swanson, "T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's Concept of Threefold Buddha Nature—A Synergy of Reality, Wisdom, and Practice," also in Griffiths and Keenan, eds., *Buddha Nature*, pp. 171–80. As pointed out by Swanson (pp. 171–72), Buddha-nature was assumed by Zhiyi as an integral part of the structure of Tiantai's systematic presentation of Buddhism, but it was not subjected to an extensive analysis. The doctrine becomes much more influential in later Tiantai writings, including those of Mazu's contemporary Zhanran, which probably reflects the greater interest in the tathāgatagarbha and Buddha-nature doctrines during the Tang period.

[15] Much has been made of the purported close connection between the early Chan school and the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*. Though this text undoubtedly played some role in the early history of Chan, I have strong reservations about its doctrinal influence on early Chan teachings, including those of the Northern School. As suggested by Bernard Faure, it seems much more plausible that the *Lankāvatāra* was transmitted in the early Chan school more as a talismanic text then as a doctrinal scripture, as there is little evidence that its doctrines were of great interest to Chan monks. See Bernard Faure,

and significance were also systematically explicated in the seminal *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the only Indian treatise to deal extensively with it. An example of the presence of tathātatagarbha ideas in the Mahayana canon is the famous passage about the presence of the wisdom of the Buddha in every person from the *Huayan* scripture, one of the most often quoted sections of a key text in the Buddhist canon that was immensely popular during Mazu's lifetime.

> There is no place where the wisdom of the Tathāgata does not reach. Wherefore? There is not a single sentient being that is not fully possessed of the wisdom of the Tathāgata. It is only due to their false thinking, fallacies, and attachments that beings fail to realize this. If they could only abandon their false thoughts, then the all-encompassing wisdom, the spontaneous wisdom, and the unobstructed wisdom will clearly manifest themselves.... Children of the Buddha, the wisdom of the Tathāgata is also thus—boundless and unobstructed, universally able to benefit all sentient beings, it is fully present within the bodies of sentient beings. But those who are ignorant, prone to false thinking and attachments, do not know this, are not aware of it, and thus do not obtain benefit. Then the Tathāgata, with his unobstructed pure eye of wisdom, universally beholds all sentient beings in the *dharmadhātu*, and says: "Strange! How Strange! How can it be that although all sentient beings are fully possessed of the wisdom of the Tathāgata, because of their ignorance and confusion, they neither know nor see that? I should teach them the Noble Path, thus enabling them to forever leave false thoughts and attachments, and perceive the vast wisdom of the Tathāgata within themselves, not different from the Buddhas'." Having taught them how to cultivate the Noble Path so that they can forsake false thinking, after they forsake false thinking, they will realize the limitless wisdom of the Tathāgata, thereby benefiting and comforting all sentient beings.[16]

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*Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, p. 148. In a similar manner, later Chan texts, such as the *Platform Scripture*, became emblems of spiritual legitimacy when the increasingly self-confident Chan tradition began to replace its early efforts to shroud its teachings in the cloak of scriptural authority, at the time when the first attempts to create a new Chan canon were being made. For additional discussion of the role of the *Lankāvatāra Scripture* in the development of Chan, see Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 285-89, and McRae, *Northern School*, pp. 90-91.

[16] T 10.272c–73a; English translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Manifestation of the Tathāgata: Buddhahood According to the Avatamsaka Sūtra*, pp. 105–06.

Tathāgatagarbha doctrine's widespread acceptance in China was reinforced by the immense popularity of some of the scriptures where it played important role, especially the *Huayan* and the *Nirvana* scriptures. Its wide appeal to Chinese Buddhists was also reflected in the creation of Chinese apocryphal texts whose teachings were informed by its theoretical outlook and religious sentiments. Popular Chinese apocryphal scriptures, such as *Yuanjue jing* and *Shoulengyan jing* (*Śūrangama Sūtra*), presented Siniticized versions of tathāgatagarbha and Buddha-nature thought.[17] The same was the case with the hugely influential *Awakening of Faith*, whose systematization of tathāgatagarbha theory, juxtaposed with the Yogācāra notion of *ālayavijñāna* (storehouse consciousness), was a defining influence on Huayan and Chan.[18] The widespread acceptance and enduring popularity of all these texts further helped to ensure tathāgatagarbha doctrine's paramount position in the world of Chinese Buddhism.

As an integral part of Sui and Tang Buddhism, the early Chan tradition was also noticeably influenced by the tathāgatagarbha doctrine.[19] Such influence is clearly noticeable in the records of the Northern School of Chan, and the doctrine continued to

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[17] For these two texts' influence on Chan, see Nishi Giyū, "Zen to nyoraizō shisō ni tsuite," ZBKK 3 (1971), pp. 10–19. The close relationship between the Hongzhou school and the *Sūrangama Sūtra* is also discussed in Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 234. There he makes the somewhat curious assertion that because this scripture was used by the Hongzhou school (for which there is not much evidence, as far as I can tell), it was avoided by Zongmi, all of whose writings, according to Yanagida, harbored the intention of criticizing Mazu and the Hongzhou school.

[18] For the influence of the *Awakening of Faith* on the development of Chan doctrine, see Kamata Shigeo, "Chūgoku zen shisō keisei no kyōgakuteki haikei: Daijō kishinron o chūshin to shite," *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō* 49 (1969), pp. 43–116 (esp. pp. 98–109, which deal with its influence on the Hongzhou school).

[19] See Ogawa Hironuki, "Shoki zenshū ni mirareru nyoraizō shisō," *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu kenkyū jiyō* 28 (1970), pp. 14–23. Ogawa follows the traditional narrow view that defines early Chan as the tradition of the putative "six Chan patriarchs," and he does not discuses other influential parts of the early Chan movement, including the Northern school.

have an effect on the formulation of new Chan teachings during the classical period dominated by the Hongzhou School.[20] The tathāgatagarbha doctrine, as understood by the Tang Buddhists, basically postulated that everybody is endowed with the luminous true mind of suchness, which is primordially enlightened and pure by nature. Huangbo describes the true mind in the following terms:

> From the very beginning this mind has not been subject to birth and death. It is neither green nor yellow; it is without form and characteristics. It does not belong to either existence or nothingness, and it cannot be reckoned as being either young or old. It is neither long nor short, neither large nor small. It transcends all limitations, words, and traces. It is just this very thing—if you stir a thought, you miss it. It is like empty space, without limits, beyond conceptualization. It is only this One Mind that is Buddha, and Buddha is not different from sentient beings.[21]

Though it is originally present in everybody, due to the inveterate force of ignorance—whose origin is not explained in a fully satisfactory manner—the primordially pure mind is covered with defilement.[22] As a consequence, ordinary people who are ignorant of the true nature of reality cannot perceive their pristine numinous mind and attain spiritual liberation. They thus remain tangled in the web of desires and false views, because of which they continue to transmigrate in the cycle of samsara.

One of the ambiguous points of the Buddha-nature theory was the ontological status of the tathāgatagarbha. In such Indian texts like *Śrīmālādevī* and *Ratnagotravibhāga*, the tathāgatagarbha represents the true conception of emptiness, and the authors of these scriptures most likely saw themselves as inheritors of the genuine

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[20] Tathāgatagarbha theory's influence on the classical Chan tradition is discussed in Ogawa Hironuki, "Chūgoku zen (goke tō) ni mirareru nyoraizō shisō," *Komazawa daigaku bukkyō gakubu kenkyū jiyō* 29 (1971), pp. 143–54.

[21] *Chuanxin fayao*, T 48.379c; translation adapted from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 21.

[22] The problem of the origins of ignorance is discussed in Peter N. Gregory, "The Problem of Theodicy in the *Awakening of Faith*," *Religious Studies* 22/1 (1986), pp. 63–78.

Mādhyamika position.[23] Similar position is enunciated in *Foxing lu*, a treatise about Buddha-nature that was probably either authored or translated by Paramārtha in the sixth century. This text plainly states that "Buddha-nature is the thusness revealed by the dual emptiness of person and things."[24] But in addition to its explication as *śūnya* (empty of self-nature), the tathāgatagarbha is also described in opposite terms, as *aśūnya*. In this second sense, tathāgatagarbha is sometimes conceived of as a kind of essentialised substratum of being that evokes the notion of permanent self (*atman*). Such doctrinal slant appears to contravene the doctrine of *anātman*, which represents a foundational insight of Buddhist religiosity. This tendency is especially noticeable in the *Mahāparinirvāna Scripture*, whose influence was unmistakably felt in early Chan.

The Southern School of Chan is described as accepting this later substantialist interpretation of the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine. Such interpretation is evident, for example, in the *Platform Scripture's* famous injunction to "directly realize the (Buddha) nature."[25] Nonetheless, although classical Chan (including the Hongzhou School) has recently been criticized for appropriating a "non-Buddhist" notion of self, in the texts we are concerned with here the exact ontological status of the tathāgatagarbha is not clearly defined.[26] There are passages where the Buddha-nature is identified with emptiness, but other passages can be interpreted as pointing to some sort of substratum that partakes of

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[23] Brian Edward Brown, *The Buddha Nature: A Study of the Tathāgatagarbha and Ālayavijñāna*, pp. 31–35, 135–41.

[24] T 31.787b; quoted in Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature*, p. 17. King's volume is an extensive study of this text.

[25] See Yinshun, *Zhongguo chanzong shi*, pp. 381–85.

[26] The most trenchant critiques of Chan as teaching a non-Buddhist version of the *ātman* doctrine can be found in Matsumoto Shiryō's *Zen shisō no hihanteki kenkyū*.

the characteristics of a self. But, as we will see, in Baizhang's record at least, the first sense seems to be much more common.

A representative example of the general understanding of the tathāgatagarbha doctrine during the mid-Tang period is the following passage from Zongmi's *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu.*

> This teaching says that all sentient beings possess the true mind of emptiness and quiescence, whose nature is without inception fundamentally pure. Bright, unobscured, astute, and constantly aware, it constantly abides to the end of time. It is called Buddha-nature; it is also called tathāgatagarbha and mind-ground. [Because] from time without beginning it has been concealed by false thoughts, [sentient beings] cannot realize it, and thereby experience birth and death. The Supremely Enlightened (i.e. the Buddha), feeling pity for them, manifests in the world to proclaim that all phenomena characterized by birth and death are empty, and to reveal the complete identity of this mind with all Buddhas.[27]

Since the mind of an ordinary person is essentially the same as the mind of the Buddha, the purpose of the teachings of Buddhism is to lead the spiritual seeker to see through the misguided attachment to illusory "false thoughts" and realize his/her true nature, which is none other than the pure luminous mind of suchness. At the moment of awakening, the latent potency of the Buddha-like wisdom inherent in each person's mind is transformed into the actuality of an enlightened vision of reality that is accompanied by an active manifestation of the overabundance of wisdom and compassion that characterize Buddha's presence in the world.

As we will see in the following pages, the notion that everybody is endowed with Buddha-nature, and thus inherently enlightened, did shape virtually all aspects of the Hongzhou School's doctrines and practices. That included its understanding of the nature of the mind, its interpretation of Buddhahood, and its consideration of the spiritual disciplines

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[27] T 48.404b-c; quoted in my *Manifestation of the Tathāgata*, p. 33.

that are needed for the realization of spiritual awakening. Nonetheless, although the tathāgatagarbha theory did form the main doctrinal foundation for Hongzhou School's teachings and practices, the continuing influence of the other two major doctrinal systems of Indian Mahayana—Mādhyamika and Yogācāra—is also evident in the extant records of Mazu and his disciples.[28] There the Mādhyamika teaching of emptiness and Yogācāra's affirmation of mind's pivotal role in the construction of phenomenal reality are often presented alongside Buddha nature theory's depiction of mind's inherent enlightenment as the basis for authentic religious practice and realization. The seemingly random mixing of different Mahayana doctrines in the records of monks associated with the Hongzhou School is a reflection of the fact that they never really tried to create a systematic approach to Buddhist doctrine along the lines of Zhiyi's Tiantai doctrinal system, or the Huayan system developed by Zhiyan and Fazang.

It is safe to say that there was not much that was new or original in the doctrines developed by the Chan School. As a matter of fact, it is very important to note that in terms of its doctrinal outlook, the Chan School is quite mainstream. Instead of charting novel directions in the doctrinal evolution of Sinitic Buddhism, the Chan School distinguished itself by the creative ways in which it expressed mainstream doctrinal tents, and especially in the manner in which it applied those same ideas in the course of religious life. Chan teachers excelled at creating or appropriating attention-catching phrases—such as "no-mind" and "mind is Buddha"—that in concrete and direct manner conveyed major doctrinal tenets.[29] Indeed, its ability to simplify rarefied religious ideas

[28] The role of the emptiness teaching in the Chan teachings is discussed briefly (and in very general terms) in Kinoshita Junichi, "Zen ni okeru kū shisō," SK 5 (1963), pp. 45–49.

[29] See Kamata, "Chūgoku zen shisō keisei no kyūgakuteki haikei," p. 110.

and express them in more concrete ways eventually gave Chan something of an edge vis-à-vis the more doctrinally-oriented schools. For most people, abstruse Mahayana doctrines were rather difficult to comprehend, especially when they were expressed in the arcane discursive forms employed by philosophically-oriented schools like Huayan and Tiantai.

The Hongzhou School's appropriation of existing doctrinal schemata, and its failure to develop a coherent and systematic theoretical framework along the lines of the Tiantai and Huayan systems, largely stemmed from its contemplative orientation. Such orientation went together with an ambivalent attitude towards highly structured and philosophically-oriented systems of religious doctrine. In accord with the Chan movement's early origins in the Buddhist contemplative traditions that flourished in sixth and seventh century China, Mazu and his disciples used Buddhist tenets in a manner that was consistent with their emphasis on presenting religious doctrines as systems of practical teachings about the essential elements of spiritual life. Within such a framework, doctrines were introduced as sets of "practical" guidelines about the practice and realization of the deepest truths of Buddhism. Such applied use of doctrine—which guarded against dogmatic assertions of indelible truths and put the emphasis on its performative functions— was also reinforced by Chan's understanding of the provisional nature of conceptual constructs. As we will see below, the teachings of Buddhism (including the teachings of Chan) were seen as expedient means employed in the quest for ultimate truth and meaning. In the final analysis, they were provisional constructs introduced in order to deal with spiritual issues pertinent to contemplative practice, rather then intellectually unassailable conceptual representations of the nature of reality.

**Shifting Conceptions of Religious Authority**

From the early beginnings of Buddhism in China, the scriptures served as main sources of religious authority. As such, they were widely used to judge the authenticity or orthodoxy of different religious doctrines and practices. Even when the Chinese Buddhists started to develop their own interpretations of the various Buddhist teachings they received from India and Central Asia, they still continued to use the scriptures to lend legitimacy to their own ideas. The Buddhist canon was vast, and included many texts written from a wide variety of different perspectives. Since the canon presented a broad range of diverse doctrinal standpoints, it was not too difficult to find a scriptural passage that could be used to support a novel interpretation of existing teachings, or to lend credence to an entirely new religious idea. In the course of time, Chinese monks became quite adept at using creative hermeneutical strategies for the purpose of interpreting scriptural passages in forced ways that gave support to views espoused by them, even if their exegesis did stray from the meaning of the original canonical texts, or led into directions not envisaged by them.

New doctrinal developments that reflected the concerns of the Sinitic Buddhist traditions were also provided with additional scriptural legitimacy by the creation of apocryphal scriptures and treatises that enunciated the same or similar ideas. One such example that is directly related to Chan, probably originating in Korea, was the *Vajrasāmadhi Scripture*. This text was composed during the seventh century in order to lend scriptural support to the novel doctrines of the early Chan School, which at the time

was entering the Korean peninsula for the first time and was facing a backlash from the already-established doctrinal schools.[30]

Salient examples of the creative use of Buddhist scriptures to lend support to uniquely Sinitic forms of doctrinal discourse are the writings of the main architects of the grand systematizations of Buddhist teachings created by the Huayan and Tiantai schools. Brilliant Chinese monks, such as Zhiyi and Fazang, created sophisticated doctrinal systems that are justly assessed as the crowning achievements of the philosophical development of Chinese Buddhism. Though these doctrinal systems were presented (or subsequently interpreted) as systematic expositions of profound teachings expressed by a particular scripture—the *Lotus Scripture* in the case of Tiantai and the *Huayan Scripture* in the case of Huayan—they clearly demonstrated their authors' originality as religious thinkers.[31]

But even though they were engaging in the formulation of original religious ideas that reflected the influence of Sinitic intellectual concerns and patterns of thinking alien to the Indian religious traditions, Chinese monks like Fazang and Zhiyi went to extraordinary efforts to buttress their standpoints and arguments with copious quotations from Buddhist canonical texts. As they were making use of the scriptures and other important treatises composed by noted Indian monks, as well as of the Chinese

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[30] For a study and translation of this text, see Robert Buswell, *The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea*: The Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra, *A Buddhist Apocriphon.*

[31] The choice of a scripture as the main foundation of the theoretical systems invented by these monks, who set the intellectual agenda for most of Sui-Tang Buddhism, was not without significance. It represented a departure from the wide-spread use of scholastic treatises from Indian provenance as the models for the doctrinal systems formulated during the sixth century, such as those put forward by the Shelun, Dilun, and Sanlun schools. One of the reasons for that shift was the fact that the contents of the scriptures, which often presented Buddhist teachings through similies and metaphors, were much

apocryphal scriptures, in order to further their arguments, they often showed little concern about whether their interpretations could in any meaningful way be substantiated by the original texts. [32] Sometimes they did not even recoil from ingeniously (mis)interpreting the canonical texts in order to advance their own arguments.

The early Chan movement adopted a respectful attitude towards the scriptures that in most respects was similar to that of the other mainstream traditions of Chinese Buddhism. Such approbatory dispositions towards the canonical tradition are evident in the choice made by some members of the early Chan movement to use the transmission of the *Lankāvatāra Scripture* as a symbol for the transmission of Chan. Jingjue's (683–750?) *Lengqie shizi ji*, the main text that makes such connection, even goes as far as to recognize Gunabhadra, who produced the first Chinese translation of the scripture but had no direct connection with the Chan movement, as a Chan patriarch who directly preceded Bodhidharma.[33] Moreover, when Shenhui criticized this version of early Chan "history" with the intention of replacing Shenxiu with Huineng as the main disciple of Hongren (and establishing him as the sixth Chan patriarch), he also used the *Diamond Scripture* as a central symbol in the alternative transmission narrative invented by him.[34]

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more malleable to new interpretations than the carefully structured and precisely argued doctrines presented in Indian scholarly treatises.

[32] See Stanley Weinstein, "Imperial Patronage in the Formation of Tang Buddhism," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Perspectives on the T'ang*, p. 272.

[33] *Lengqie shizi ji*, T 85.1283c–84c. For a discussion of this text, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, pp. 58–87, Philip B. Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, pp. 16–23, and McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 88–91.

[34] See Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra*, p. 34.

The tendency to legitimize Chan practice by recourse to the scriptural tradition is also readily evident in the texts of the Northern School.[35] The numerous attempts to synthesize Buddhist doctrine and contemplative practice, one of the main characteristics of these texts, are reminiscent of earlier efforts to bring together the two main streams of sixth century Buddhism, scholastic exegesis and meditative practice. The most successful among the attempts to bridge the gap between the scholastic and contemplative orientations was Zhiyi's grand Tiantai synthesis, which exerted a great influence on early Chan. One strategy employed by Northern School teachers to accomplish that goal was the use of traditional concepts from the canonical tradition in order to express novel Chan ideas. This practice, which Bernard Faure has aptly termed "symbolic exegesis," involved redefining traditional Buddhist practices and rubrics in a manner peculiar to the nascent Chan movement.[36] Symbolic exegesis was especially popular with the Northern School, but it was also employed in the *Platform Scripture* and the sermons of Shenhui. In more extreme cases—especially evident in (but not restricted to) the records of Shenhui—scriptural passages were either misquoted or used merely as props for justifying ideas that were not at all present in the original text, even if in the process of doing so the canonical teachings were manifestly misinterpreted.[37]

Neither symbolic exegesis nor other comparable strategies for bridging the gap between Chan and the canonical tradition are readily apparent in the records of the Hongzhou School. The tone of these records exudes a sense of self-confidence that gives

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[35] See Fuare, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 6, and David Chappell, "Hermeneutical Phases in Chinese Buddhism," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, pp. 193–96.

[36] Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 41.

[37] For a discussion of Shenhui's ingenious (mis)use of scriptural quotations, see Suzuki Tetsuo, *Chūgoku zenshūshi ronkō*, pp. 132–34.

the impression that Mazu, and his disciples even more, did not feel the need to make an extra effort to prove that their teachings were supported by, or in accord with the canonical texts. One of the rare exceptions is the following passage that opens one of Mazu's sermons, where there is a direct mention of scriptural authority.

> The Patriarch (i.e. Mazu) said to the assembly, "All of you should believe that your mind is Buddha, that this mind is identical with Buddha. The Great Master Bodhidharma came from India to China, and transmitted the One Mind teaching of Mahayana so that it can lead you all to awakening. Fearing that you will be too confused and will not believe that this One Mind is inherent in all of you, he used the *Lakāvatāra Scripture* to seal the sentient beings' mind-ground. Therefore, in the *Lakāvatāra Scripture*, mind is the essence of all the Buddha's teachings, no gate is the Dharma-gate."[38]

The irony of the above passage is that it indicates that Mazu was advocating the connection between Chan and the *Lakāvatāra Scripture*, which is usually associated with the Northern School, while ignoring the putative link between the "orthodox" Southern Chan School and the *Diamond Scripture* that was invented by Shenhui and his cohorts. The sense of incongruity is even greater when we consider that Mazu came to be considered as the main representative of the Southern Chan School, whose later followers unanimously accepted the depiction of the Northern School as a heterodox tradition of early Chan.[39]

Although in the earliest records of the Hongzhou School there is little direct evidence of a concentrated effort to demonstrate the compatibility between Chan and the scriptures, at the same time, there is little that offers support to the stereotypical depiction of Mazu and his disciples as iconoclasts who repudiated the canonical tradition, and

[38] MY, XZJ 119.405d–06a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 62.

[39] As we saw in Chapter Six, that was not a view shared by Mazu's disciples, who accepted the Northern and Niutou schools as legitimate, and were critical of Shehui's divisive sectarian activities.

whose radical Chan teachings harbored strong bibliophobic tendencies. Chan's attitudes towards writing in general, and the canonical text in particular, were never as simple as popular slogans—such as the widely-quoted motto which depicts Chan as "A special transmission outside of the teachings, which does not institutes words and letters"—seem to indicate.[40] This slogan, as well as most other Chan textual materials that depict similar sentiments, were created during the Five Dynasties and early Song periods, as were the other records that retroactively attribute vehement anti-intellectualism to mid-Tang Chan teachers. It is questionable if the debasement of writing and denunciation of scripture, as conveyed by the popular motto I just quoted, were true of any mainstay Chan tradition. But, at any rate, it is clear that we cannot establish a direct connection between such sentiments and the Hongzhou School.[41]

The main leaders of the Hongzhou School were well-read monks conversant with the Buddhist canonical tradition. Many of them dedicated the early years of their monastic training to the study of Buddhist scriptures, which was a common path followed by the elite segments of the Tang clergy. A good example of such a monk was Baizhang, who after his ordination in 767 went to Lujiang to study the scriptures.[42] The records of the teachings Baizhang imparted to his disciples during the final two decades of his life

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[40] The verse of which these two lines are a part of first appeared in *Zuting shiyuan*, XZJ 113.66c. For the origins of the individual lines of this verse, see Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shiso no kenkyū*, pp. 461–62, 470–77.

[41] I think that the "special transmission outside of the teachings" motto did not really represent the attitudes of the mainstream Chan movement at any period of its historical development, nor does it reflect the manner in which canonical literature was used by the Chan school. The statement should perhaps best be read as an example of the strategies that the early Song partisans of sectarian Chan identity developed during their ideological battles waged in order to assert the uniqueness and superiority of the Chan tradition vis-à-vis the other competing schools of Buddhism.

[42] See the discussion of his life in Chapter Five.

reveal that the extensive knowledge of the canonical tradition he acquired during the formative years of his monastic vocation continued to inform his religious outlook until the end of his life. The records of Baizhang's sermons and conversations with his disciples are full of scriptural quotations and allusions, and reveal a monk who was at ease with both the contemplative and doctrinal aspects of the Buddhist tradition. Baizhang's record is not unique in this respect. The same propensity to quote a wide variety of scriptural sources and make free use of the canonical tradition is also evident in the records of Mazu and his other disciples. The table below illustrates the scriptural sources that were either directly quoted or alluded to in three main Chan sources from the mid-Tang—Mazu's sermons,[43] Dazhu's *Dunwu yaomen*, and Baizhang's *Baizhang guanglu*.[44]

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[43] This includes all five extant sermons of Mazu, which do not appear together as a single text. See the discussion of their provenance in Chapter Two. For a useful presentation of the original Chinese texts of all extant versions of each sermon, which lends itself to easy comparison, see Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 484–89, 496–98, 504–07, 512.

[44] Because of the large number of quotations from diverse sources that appear in *Dunwu yaomen*, in this and the following table I have not included a number of less known texts which are only quoted once or twice by Dazhu, but are not quoted in the other two texts. Examples of such texts include *Fangkuang jing* 方廣經 and *Fo shuo jiuzhi jing* 佛說救疾經. Moreover, because of the lack of critical editions and studies of Baizhang's text, and the manner in which canonical texts are quoted in it (see below), it is highly plausible that I have not been able to identify all quotations from the sources listed in the table, and the actual number of quotations/allusions that appear in BGL is probably higher then it is indicated in the table.

Table 1. Scriptural quotation/allusions in the records of the Hongzhou School

| Scripture Title | Mazu's sermons | *Dunwu yaomen* | *Baizhang guanglu* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Lotus Scripture* | 1? | 1 | 4 |
| *Huayan Scripture* | 3 | | 3 |
| *Nirvana Scripture* | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| *Lankāvatāra Scripture* | 6 | 1 | |
| *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures[45] | | 11 | 4 |
| *Mahāratnakuta Scripture* | | | 2 |
| *Mahāsamnipāta Scripture* | | 1 | 1 |
| *Vimalakīrti Scripture* | 7 | 11 | 4 |
| *Foming Scripture* | 1 | 1 | |
| *Śrīmālādevī Scripture* | 1 | | |
| *Fo yijiao Scripture* | | 1 | |
| *Zhongbenqi Scripture* | 1 | | |

The titles listed in the above table represented the most popular Mahayana scriptures that were widely read and venerated by monks and laity throughout the Tang period (and, for that matter, during most of the history of Buddhism in China). It is apparent that there is considerable overlap in the choice of scriptural texts that appear in the three Chan records; sometimes the three records are even quoting or alluding to the same scriptural passages. Among all the scriptures, the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* emerges as

[45] In both Dazhu's and Baizhang's texts, most of the quotations are from the *Diamond Scripture*, but there are some quotations from other scriptures belonging to the Prajñāpāramitā corpus. For the sake of convenience, in the above table all of these closely-related texts are assigned to the same category.

the clear favorite. That reflects the general popularity of this scripture during the Tang period, as well as its widespread acceptance within the Chan School as a canonical text whose ideas were close to those of Chan. Furthermore, each of the three monks seems to have had other texts with which he felt greater affinity. In the case of Mazu, apparently that was the *Lankāvatāra Scripture*, while Dazhu (and to a lesser extend Baizhang) show greater affinity towards scriptures belonging to the Prajñāpāramitā corpus, among whom the popular *Diamond Scripture* is quoted by far most often.

It is interesting to note that, for the most part, the titles listed in Table 1 overlap with the titles of the texts quoted in the records of Shehui.[46] The same texts are also quoted in the records of the Northern School of Chan. There is also a considerable overlap between the above listing and the text quoted by Mahāyāna (Moheyan), the Chan teacher who was the Chinese representative at the council in Lhasa.[47] That indicates that Mazu and his disciples were using pretty much the same canonical texts as those monks who led the earlier Chan movement, even though the manner in which they used them was slightly different (see below). As far as the canonical texts themselves are concerned, none of them was exclusively linked to the Chan School, despite lame efforts (noted above) to forge special connections between the *Lakāvatāra* and *Diamond* scriptures and the nascent Chan movement. Chan teachers, including Mazu and his disciples, made extensive use of popular Mahayana scriptures and treatises that at the time were widely

[46] For a useful summary of the canonical sources quoted in Shehui's records, see the table in Suzuki, *Chūgoku zenshūshi ronkō*, p. 128.

[47] See Paul Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa: une controverse sur le quiétisme entre bouddhistes de l'Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe siècle de l'ère chrétienne*, p. 160. For more information about Mahāyāna, see Luis O. Gómez, "The Direct and Gradual Approaches of Zen Master Mahayana: Fragments of the Teachings of Mo-ho-yen," in Gimello and Gregory, eds., *Studies in Ch'an and Hua Yen*, pp. 69–167, and Yamaguchi Zuihō, "Makaen no zen," in Shinohara Hisao and Tanaka Ryōshō,

accepted as the main statements of the orthodox teachings of Buddhism throughout East Asia.

Though most of the quotations that appear in the above three records came from Chinese translations of Indian scriptures, Mazu, Dazhu, and Baizhang also quoted other texts. That is especially the case with apocryphal scriptures and other Chinese documents that enjoyed popularity during the Tang period. The most important of such Chinese sources that appear in the three records are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Apocryphal scriptures and other Chinese treatises quoted/alluded to in the records of the Hongzhou School

| Text Title | Mazu's sermons | *Dunwu yaomen* | *Baizhang guanglu* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Chanmen jing* | | 2 | |
| *Faju jing* | 1 | 3 | |
| *Fanwang jing* | | 2 | |
| *Surangama Scripture* | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| *Dasheng qixin lun* | 2 | 2 | |
| *Zhao lun* | 1 | | 4 |
| Fu dashi's records | 1 | | 1 |

While it is evident that Chinese apocryphal scriptures, especially the first four texts listed in the table, were read and quoted by the Hongzhou monks, they were somewhat less in vogue when compared with the Indian scriptures. The inclusion of *Dasheng qixin lun* in the list should not come as a surprise, considering the immense importance of this text in the development of the main Buddhist doctrinal currents during

eds., *Tonkō butten to zen*, pp. 379–407.

the Tang period. The influence of this apocryphal treatise on the teachings of the Hongzhou School is actually greater then the number of quotations indicate. Even though *Dasheng qixin lun* is not extensively quoted in the three texts we are concerned with here, its great impact on the development of Chan doctrine is readily evident.[48] Chan monks also seem to have been fond of reading the records of eminent Buddhist leaders from the period of disunity whose thought presaged some Chan teachings. Among them, the most popular were Kumārajīva's disciple Sengzhao and the popular lay sage Fu dashi, both of whom are often mentioned in Chan texts from this and later periods.

Even though Mazu and his disciples made extensive use of Buddhist scriptures and other canonical texts, the peculiar manner in which they used those sources shows a subtle, but clearly discernible shift in attitude towards scriptural authority. When we compare their use of canonical materials with that of the earlier Buddhist traditions (including the early Chan movement), it becomes evident that although the texts that are cited are not much different, the manner in which they are used does differ. In their sermons Mazu and Baizhang seamlessly wove in numerous quotations from and allusions to the Buddhist scriptures, usually without identifying their sources. Scriptural passages or metaphors are integrated into the general narrative structure of Chan sermons without delineating clear structural boundaries between the excerpts from the scriptures and the teachings of the Chan teacher. The following two passages from Mazu's sermons illustrate this point.

> [The *Vimalakīrti Scripture* says] "Those who seek the Dharma should not seek for anything." [As it is taught in the *Huayan Scripture*,] Outside of mind there is no other Buddha, outside of Buddha there is no other mind. Not attaching to good and not rejecting evil, without reliance on either purity or defilement, one realizes that the

[48] See Kamata, "Chūgoku zen shisō keisei no kyūgakuteki haikei," pp. 98–109.

nature of offense is empty: it cannot be found in each thought because it is without self-nature. Therefore, [as explained in the *Huayan* and *Lankāvatāra* scriptures] "the three realms are mind-only," and [as stated in the *Faju jing*] "all phenomena in the universe are marked by a single Dharma." Whenever we see form, it is just seeing the mind. The mind does not exist by itself; its existence is due to form. Whatever you are saying, it is just [what Dushun's *Fajie guanmen* refers to as] "a phenomenon which is identical with the principle." They are all without obstruction, and the fruit of the way to awakening is also like that....[49]

[The *Vimalakīrti Scripture* says,] "Not obliterating the conditioned and not dwelling in the unconditioned." The conditioned is the function of the unconditioned, while the unconditioned is the essence of the conditioned. Because of not dwelling on support, it has been said, [in the *Huayan Scripture*, that it is] "like space which rests on nothing." [According to *Dasheng qixin lun*,] the mind can be spoken of [in terms of its two aspects,] "birth and death, and suchness." [As pointed out in early Chan texts,] The mind as suchness is like a clear mirror which can reflect images.[50] The mirror symbolizes the mind, while the images symbolize the dharmas. If the mind grasps at dharmas, then it gets involved in external causes and conditions, which is the meaning of birth and death. If the mind does not grasp at dharmas, that is suchness.[51]

If it were not for the information about the sources used by Mazu that I have added in parenthesis, and the insertion of quotation marks to identify the quotations—both of which are missing in the original Chinese text—any reader who is not well-acquainted with Buddhist canonical literature will probably fail to notice that what at first sight appears to be an original part of a Chan sermon is in fact little more then a collection of canonical quotations accompanied by comments that explicate the quoted passages. There

[49] MY, XZJ 119.406a; translation adapted (with minor modifications) from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 62.

[50] For a discussion of the metaphor of the mirror, see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 144–46. As McRae points out, the metaphor was connected to the Yogācāra doctrine of the "great perfect mirror wisdom," one of the four wisdoms that emerge when *ālaya* is transformed at its basis with the realization of enlightenment. Baizhang seems to have been aware of this connection, as in a number of passages in BGL he refers to the mirror wisdom.

[51] MY, XZJ 119.406d; translation adapted (with minor modifications) from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 67.

is really very little in the above two passages that readily identifies them as teachings unique to the classical Chan tradition. On the contrary, all the ideas presented in them represented mainstream doctrinal positions that were common to most of Tang Buddhism.

The above manner of using canonical sources was not unique to Mazu. The same propensity to imbed canonical passages or allusions into Chan sermons without divulging their provenance is also characteristic of Baizhang's *Guanglu*, and can also be found in Huangbo's *Chuanxin fayao*. Like his teacher, Baizhang often quoted a scriptural authority without in any way indicating that the passage in question was from another source. Similar tendency to quote a scripture without identifying the source, or even indicating that certain passage is a quotation from the canon, can also be found in the writings of earlier Buddhist scholiasts, such as Zhiyi.[52] Furthermore, some quotations are marked as coming from a scripture by prefacing them with the phrase "a scripture says" (*jing yun* 經云), or in a more general way by indicating that an idea comes from some other source by using such phrase as "it has been said," but without identifying the original text from which the quotation comes. There are also some occasions where the title of the canonical text is given, and the quotation is identified as such (although this is mostly the case with Chinese works, but is not the case with most scriptural quotations).

Understanding the structure of the sermons and identifying the canonical passages presented in them probably did not pose great difficulties for the audiences to whom they were addressed. In their sermons Mazu and his disciples were quoting some of the most popular scriptural passages that were probably familiar to their monastic and lay

audiences (the latter mostly consisting of educated literati and officials). That the audiences of noted Chan teachers were well-acquainted with the scriptures is evident in the extant records of questions posed by them. Many of the questions that appear in the records of Baizhang and Huangbo contain canonical passages, and some of the questions are simply requests for explaining the meaning of a well-known passage from a popular scripture.[53]

Far from revealing the kind of iconoclastic sentiments and anti-doctrinal tendencies usual associated with Chan teachers from the Tang period, the sermons of Mazu and Baizhang show an interesting sense of rapprochement between Chan and canonical Buddhism. As the structure of the sermons indicates, that conciliation between the two was symbolically enacted by the dissolution of the boundaries between the words of the Buddha and the words of Chan teachers. This blurring of distinctions between scriptural authority and the authority of Chan teachers conveys a sense of self-confidence and maturity, which was probably becoming more palpable as the nascent Hongzhou School was becoming widely accepted as the main representative of the Chan tradition, and by extension one of the main factions of elite Chinese Buddhism.

That confidence stands in contrast with the attitudes discernible in the records of people on the margins, like Shenhui, whose desire to become a representative of the orthodox faction of Chan led to his construction of fictional patriarchal tradition.[54] Like

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[52] See Paul Swanson's discussion in his "Apocryphal Texts in Chinese Buddhism: T'ien-t'ai Chih-i's use of Apocryphal Scriptures." In A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn, eds. *Canonization and Decanonization*, p. 249.

[53] For such examples, see the questions in BGL, XZJ 118.86b-d, and *Wanling lu*, T 48.385a.

[54] As pointed out by Faure, sectarian activities like those engaged in by Shenhui represented a lack of richness of tradition and a sense of personal insecurity on part of him and his followers. Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, p. 9.

his Northern School adversaries, Shenhui promoted the unity of Chan and the teachings, and was favorably inclined towards the use of scriptural teachings. But his use of scripture to lend legitimacy to his Chan teachings went even further, as can be seen from a dialogue between him and Dharma teacher Yuan. There he buttresses his rather outrageous claim that he is a tenth stage bodhisattva—a statement that, by the way, constitutes a *pārājika* offense, the most serious form of monastic transgression that leads to automatic exclusion from the order—with a quotation of a passage from the *Nirvana Scripture*.[55] In a similar, though somewhat less extreme, manner, when he was asked by Yuan what kind of teaching and practice he cultivates, Shenhui answered that he practiced the perfection of wisdom (as elucidated in the *Diamond Scripture* championed by him), which was the foundation of all practices.[56]

Unlike Shenhui, in the records of main Hongzhou figures there is little to suggest that they were overly anxious to prove the orthodoxy of their teachings, nor is there any indication that they were willing to misuse the scriptures to accomplish that goal. These texts show that the Hongzhou School had enough self-confidence to simply present its vision of the path as a true expression of authentic Buddhist religiosity. Mazu and his disciples did that without feeling any compulsion to prove that their teachings were in accord with the canonical tradition, or that they were superior to those of other schools of Chan (such as the Northern and Niutou schools). Their attitude was not that of an outsider group trying to break into and position itself as part of the mainstream religious establishment, or to create an alternative to it. Such a confident attitude reflected the fact that by that time Chan was already very much an integral part of the mainstream. In that

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[55] Yang Zengwen, ed., *Shenhui heshang chanhua lu*, p. 24.

[56] Ibid., p. 34.

sense, the Hongzhou School benefited from a situation in which previous Chan factions, especially the Northern and Niutou schools, but also to smaller degree Shenhui and his followers, had established a sense of legitimacy for Chan as part of the orthodox Buddhist tradition. Mazu's disciples were thus able simply to take over the mantle of spiritual authority, at a time when all other Chan schools were experiencing a slump arising from the passing away of popular teachers and the inability of their disciples to follow in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors.

The Hongzhou School's approach was not to disregard the mainstream canonical tradition—though its leaders were perhaps critical of some of the ways in which that tradition was interpreted and practices by their contemporaries—but to appropriate it, and to present the Chan teachings as the very essence of that tradition. It is true that the later Chan tradition adopted different, and often more radical and sectarian approaches to defining spiritual authenticity and religious authority. But as far as the mid-Tang period is concerned, Chan was still in the process of slowly becoming an integral part of the mainstream Buddhist tradition, rather a replacement for it. In the same vein, Chan teachers like Mazu and Baizhang were becoming spokespersons for Buddhism (especially for its contemplative branch), rather then alternative foci of religious authority that existed outside of the main monastic order.

The Hongzhou School's subtle but perceptible shift in its attitudes towards the Buddhist canonical tradition paralleled the changes in the attitudes towards canonical scholarship that were evidenced among Confucian-oriented scholars during the post-rebellion period. As noted in the Introduction, in the more decentralized scholarly world that was no longer dominated by the kinds of imperial commissions of large scholarly works that were prevalent during the early Tang period, unofficial Confucian scholarship

flourished. In their writings, Confucian scholars moved away from interpreting the canons in manners consistent with state's concern with its legitimacy, and presented new ideas in which the canons were primarily utilized to justify their views about a wide range of issues with which they were concerned, including questions of religious beliefs.[57] The development of such independent critical tradition in Confucian canonical learning led to what David McMullen has called the "deep interiorization" of the post-rebellion Confucian tradition.[58] Confucian scholars' more liberal attitudes towards sanctioned traditions thus presented interesting parallels with the changing attitudes towards tradition that emerged within the contemporaneous Chan movement. The *guwen* ("old-style writing") movement, led by such scholars as Han Yu, Li Ao, and Liu Zongyuan, represented an attempt to relate traditional intellectual concerns to the actualities of everyday life in mid-Tang China. As they were attempting new ways of reading the Confucian classics without recourse to established commentarial traditions, but in light of the issues and problems that were relevant to their own time, in their writings *guwen* proponents adopted an activist tone that evoked similarity with the examples set by Chan monks.[59] In that sense, it appears that Hongzhou School's redefinition of canonical authority was part of a normal pattern of inner development and maturation of the Chan movement, and also a reflection of broader changes in the intellectual and social climate that were taking place at a crucial point in China's history.

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[57] David McMullen, *State and Scholars in T'ang China*, pp. 69–70.

[58] See Ibid., p. 70.

[59] See Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity*, pp. 5–8.

### Religious Teachings as *Upāya*

The shift in the attitudes towards canonical authority noted above is predicated on an understanding of all Buddhist teachings as *upāya* (*fangbian* 方便, "expedient means"). According to this presupposition, which as one of the central tenets of Mahayana was widely accepted by the medieval Chinese Buddhists, the various teachings of Buddhism were introduced in order to offer practical guidance to the devotee in the course of his/her cultivation of the spiritual path. The Buddha was compared to a skilled doctor who prescribed medicines to cure the spiritual ailments of mankind. As different persons had different spiritual afflictions, the Buddha presented a wide range of teachings that dealt with specific problems that arose in the course of religious training. Within this interpretative framework, Buddhist doctrines perform prescriptive role, inasmuch as they delineate practical courses of religious cultivation that ultimately lead to the realization of Nirvana.

Despite the claims that the manifold descriptions of the Buddhist path formulated by various exegetical traditions were prescriptive, and as such directly concerned with the practical goals of Buddhist soteriology, many of the schematized descriptions of spiritual practices and experiences were apparently not concerned with the problems and experiences of real persons.[60] Rather, they described the spiritual progress of idealized spiritual exemplars, which in the case of most Mahayana scriptures were celestial Bodhisattvas, rather than actual historical persons. The marvelous experiences of such divine heroes took place in unearthly locales, often depicted as numinous preternatural realms starkly different from the everyday world of ordinary people. Those were splendid,

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[60] See the Introduction in Robert E. Buswell and Robert M. Gimello, eds., *Paths to Liberation: The Mārga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, p. 11.

celestial realms of mythical Bodhisattvas who inspired religious feelings of awe, faith, wonderment, and the like. The huge variety of specific manifestations of divinity described in the canonical sources were supplicated in manifold cultic practices that aimed to elicit the powerful influences of the preternatural realm to bear positive effects on the personal and communal lives of the religious devotees. Even though the qualities that celestial Bodhisattvas like Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara) and Mañjuśrī represented (compassion and wisdom in this case) were considered essential to the proper development of genuine religious disposition, the far-fetched depictions of their spiritual practices were not models that the average devotee could, or was even interested to try to follow.

Furthermore, the canonical explications of the Mahayana path to Buddhahood also showed evidence of metaphysical orientations that sharply contrasted with Buddha's supposed refusal to discuss questions of ultimate value, which in parts of the Pali canon is justified by the declaration that such discussions are not relevant to the realization of the goal of Nirvana.[61] Yet, it was precisely such metaphysical discussions about the nature of reality that attracted the attention of Chinese Buddhist scholiasts and exegetes, and shaped their theoretical speculations. While nominally asserting that they are concerned with explicating the Buddha's prescriptions about the cure of the spiritual ills that befall humanity, many Buddhist scholiasts were primarily engaged in developing intricate doctrinal systems that served as intellectually coherent and emotionally satisfying explanations of the nature of reality. A prime example of such a tendency to engage in metaphysical speculation—which of course was not specific to Chinese Buddhism, but

could also be found in Indian Buddhism as well—is the Huayan doctrinal system, which was finalized by Chengguan, the putative fourth patriarch of the Huayan School who was active at the same time that the Hongzhou School was spreading throughout China.

Time and again, Chan attempted to dissociate itself from these two opposite poles of Buddhist spirituality, the devotional ardor of popular religious movements and the intricate cerebral speculations of the elite scholiasts. In keeping with Chan's contemplative orientation, Mazu and his disciples emphasized the pragmatic orientation of Buddhist doctrines as practical guides for actual religious behavior, whose objective was to lead to the realization of the soteriological goal of spiritual enlightenment. Because of that, and in keeping with the changing conceptions of spiritual authority noted above, they stressed the performative character of Buddhist teachings. As a consequence, they highlighted the notion that religious doctrines were not intended to be accepted as faithful descriptions of reality, which for them (and in accord with standard Mahayana formulations) was "inconceivable," and thus beyond any verbal descriptions. This point of view was expressed by Baizhang in the following passage from his record:

> All verbal teachings just cure diseases. Because the diseases are not the same, the medicines are also not the same. That is why sometimes it is said that there is Buddha, and sometimes that there is no Buddha. True words cure sickness. If the cure manages to heal, then all are true words. [On the other hand,] if they cannot effectively cure sickness, all are false words. True words are false words insofar they give rise to views; false words are true words insofar as they cut off the delusions of sentient beings. Because the disease is unreal, there is only unreal medicine to cure it.[62]

[61] See the *Cūlamālunkya Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, in Bhikkhu Ñānamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, pp. 533–36.

[62] BGL, XZJ 118.89b-c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 71.

As far as Baizhang was concerned, doctrines about the nature of the Buddha and the like were understood only in terms of their practical function as guideposts along the spiritual path. They were not to be comprehended as dogmatic theories about what is ultimately true and real. Any theory that leads to letting go of mistaken views and attachments is true in the sense that it performs a constructive role at a specific point along the spiritual path. Conversely, even the most profound doctrine can become false if it becomes an object of intellectual and/or emotional attachment, and thus give rise to dualistic views that prevent one from perceiving the wholeness of reality in an immediate way, as it truly is. Such realization implies cessation of all views, including those expressed in the scriptures, and the awakening of the faculty of wisdom. As "greed, anger, folly, and the like are poisons, the twelve divisions of Buddhist teachings are medicines" that cure them, says Baizhang. But "if a person takes a medicine when he does not have [particular] illness, then the medicine becomes the [cause] of illness."[63] The prolific variety of Buddhist doctrines is due to the fact that the spiritual diseases they are supposed to cure are numerous, and as Baizhang says in the above passage, "because the diseases are not the same, the medicines are also not the same."

The religious teachings themselves, just like the mental afflictions they are meant to obliterate or neutralize, are devoid of any intrinsic factuality and worth. Like all phenomena, they are empty of self-nature. Only when they are understood in such a way can they be successfully used in the actual course of spiritual cultivation. In the final analysis, all doctrines are provisional in the sense that they cannot capture the trues nature of reality, which by definition is beyond all conceptual constructs. Thus, although Baizhang accepts the standard Mahayana division of the teachings of Buddhism into

[63] BGL, XZJ 118.87d; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 60.

those of the incomplete and complete teachings (*liaoyi jiao* 了義教 and *buliaoyi jiao* 不了義教), he asserts that at the end of the path they both need to be abandoned:

> From entering the stream all the way up to the tenth and highest stage of the bodhisattva path, as long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the defilement of the dust of teaching. As long as there are verbal formulations, all are contained in the realm of affliction and trouble. As long as there are verbal formulations, all belong to the incomplete teaching.... At the stage of Buddhahood...neither the complete nor the incomplete teaching are admissible.[64]

Here Baizhang reflects on the dilemma common to the every Buddhist teacher. On one hand, Buddhist doctrines are indispensable as guides along the long and treacherous path to awakening. On another hand, all too often they are reified, as a consequence of which they turn into objects of attachment. When that happens, they cease to be, in terms of the famous Chan metaphor, "fingers pointing to the moon." Instead, they bind the mind and become obstacles to the realization of spiritual freedom. The continuing challenge of Chan teachers like Mazu and Baizhang was to continually reformulate and adjust their teachings, and present them in fresh ways that would prevent their eventual ossification. In the short term, they were probably for the most part successful in doing that. But in the long term such efforts were a losing proposition, and later generations of Chan adherents inevitably turned those teachings into formulaic expressions of ideals that were originally not envisioned by the monks to whom they were retroactively imputed.

As mentioned above, the conception of religious teachings as *upāya* was an important part of canonical Buddhism. Yet, its employment as a central hermeneutic principle was perhaps nowhere stressed in an as direct and uncompromising manner as in the Chan tradition to which Baizhang belonged. We can only guess how much such emphasis was a response to other developments in mid-Tang Buddhism. Nonetheless, it

[64] BGL, XZJ 118.84b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 38.

seems plausible that, at least in part, such stress on *upāya* was at least to some extent an attempt to redress specific prevalent tendencies to use canonical teachings in ways that were not in accord with the pragmatism of the *upāya* theory and its epistemological underpinnings. Such tendencies could have included the previously-noted fixation on literal interpretations of scriptural passages that describe celestial realms and the spiritual beings who populate them, as was evidenced by the increased attractiveness of popular movements that relied on the salvific efficacy of external agencies (of which the Pure Land School was a prime example). At the other end of the religious spectrum, there was the scholarly predilection to engage in metaphysical speculation, a perhaps unintended consequence of which was neglect of the exigency of the quest for spiritual liberation in favor of a search for the construction of grand systems of religious philosophy (as was the case with the Huayan School, for example).

At the same time, neither Pure Land devotionalism nor Huayan scholasticism were necessarily as one-sided as their critics depicted them. During the Tang period, the Chan movement was probably not as inimical to both tendencies, the popular/cultic and the scholarly, as it is made out to be. Though we cannot judge the full range of Mazu's and his disciples' attitudes towards such important elements of Tang Buddhism, it is my feeling that they made free use of both of them. Nevertheless, at the same time they tried to rearrange the priorities of religious life and highlight those elements of Buddhist spirituality they deemed to be most important. That meant pointing toward a somewhat different set of spiritual values, which were those of an elite contemplative tradition that was grounded in the religious ethos of medieval monasticism.

Chapter 8

# *Envisioning the Path to Awakening*

In this chapter I examine the main aspects of Hongzhou School's interpretation of the Buddhist path to spiritual enlightenment. My discussion focuses on the main themes that are enunciated in the pertinent sources, especially Baizhang's record: the conception of mind and Buddha, the characterization of the type of religious seekers to whom Chan teachings were directed, the stages and constituent elements of the path to awakening, and finally the personal and social dimension of the realization of the ultimate goal of Chan practice, awakening to the true nature of reality. To these topics I have added a brief discussion of the problem of defining Hongzhou School's religious ideas and practices in terms of the "sudden approach" of the Southern School of Chan, which is the traditional interpretative framework employed by both traditional and contemporary scholarship.

## Mind and Buddha

One of the best-known Chan adages attributed to Mazu is "Ordinary mind is the Way" (*pingchang xin shi dao* 平常心是道).[1] This statement is premised on an understanding of the nature of mind that is succinctly expressed by another well-known adage associated with him, "Mind is Buddha" (*jixin jifo* 即心即佛, or sometimes *jixin shifo* 即心是佛). Although the second adage appears in Mazu's record, and it is also discussed a number of times as a statement attributed to Mazu in the records of his disciples, it was

[1] MY, XZJ 119.40c; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 65.

not Mazu's own invention.[2] The saying can already be found in two poems composed by Baozhi (418–514) and Fu dashi (497–569), two noted figures from the period of disunity whose thought shows similarities to Chan.[3] The same saying also appears in statements attributed to a number of other earlier Chan monks, including Huike, the putative second Chan patriarch, Huineng, and Nanyang Huizhong.[4] The idea that there is some sort of identity between the mind of the Buddha and the minds of ordinary people was premised on an understanding of the nature of the mind that was based on the tathāgatagarbha doctrine. As I noted in Chapter Seven, such ideas had high currency in medieval Chinese Buddhism, and their acceptance as orthodox doctrine was by no means peculiar to the Chan School. Ultimately, they were based on various passages in the Mahayana scriptures, like the longer passage from the *Huayan Scripture* quoted in Chapter Seven. The same idea is also expressed in a terser format in the following famous verse from the same text:

> As mind is, so is the Buddha;
> As the Buddha is, so are living beings.
> One should know that the Buddha's and mind's
> Essential nature is boundless.[5]

The fact that the adage "Mind is Buddha" is most often associated with Mazu reflects the widely held perception about the important role it played in his thought. The centrality of the understanding of the essential identity of the mind of ordinary person and that of the Buddha is highlighted in the following statement from Mazu's record, which is based on the *Huayan Scripture*: "All of you should believe that your mind is Buddha, that this

[2] See MY, XZJ 119.405d, 408b; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 62, 73, 78.

[3] CDL 29.603, and CDL 30.625, respectively.

[4] See Ishikawa Rikizan, "Basozen ni okeru sokushin sokubutsu no rekishiteki kadai," *Komazawa daigaku daigakuin bukkyōgaku kenkyūkai nenpō* 5 (1971), p. 153.

[5] T 10.102a; Cleary, trans., *The Flower Ornament Scripture*, vol. 1, p. 452.

mind is identical with Buddha...Outside of mind there is no other Buddha, outside of Buddha there is no other mind."[6] Such a positive characterization of the human predicament, with its optimistic affirmation of the accessibility of spiritual liberation to all (in theory at least), evidently had an enduring appeal. In fact, its impact can still be readily found in contemporary East Asian Buddhism. After all, it is hard to imagine a more positive assessment of each individuals' ability to achieve religious perfection than to assert that he or she is essentially enlightened, and that all it takes to actualize the numinous state of awakening is to realize this immutable fact about the true condition of one's innermost essential nature.

These ideas about the identity of the mind of the Buddha and the mind of ordinary person were premised not only on the notion that the Buddha-nature is unrealized spiritual potential for the realization of Buddhahood, but that it is the "true mind" (*zhenxin*) of each and every person, a substratum of pure awareness that is behind all thoughts and actions. Ordinary people are unaware of its sublime actuality because of their attachments and desires, and their failure to see that the deluded thoughts that obscure the true mind are adventitious to their true nature. In that sense, all activities performed in the course of everyday life are functions (*yong* 用) of Buddha-nature, which is the true essence of each person. This kind of discernment, which evokes the description of the "mind of sentient being" and its relationship with ultimate reality presented in the *Awakening of Faith*, seem to be implied by the following statement from one of Mazu's sermons: "If you want to know the mind, that what is talking right now is nothing else but

[6] MY, XZJ 119.405d; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 62. Similar versions of the sermon where this statement appears can also be found in CDL 6.104–05; ZJL 1, T 48.418b; ZTJ 14.304; TGDL 8, XZJ 135.326b-c.

your mind. This mind is called Buddha. It is also the Buddha of the true Dharma-body (*dharmakāya*), and it is also called the way."[7]

Notwithstanding the broad appeal of its underlying premise of the universal accessibility of enlightenment, the teaching of "mind is Buddha" also inherited some of the problems associated with the tathāgatagarbha doctrine, on which it was based. Foremost among them was the tendency to reify the "true mind," and to interpret it as an *atman*-like essence, a pure and permanent substratum of ontic subjectivity that resides in each person and constitutes the basis of the phenomenal existence of samsara. Furthermore, the notion that defilements are illusory and each person is fundamentally enlightened could also lead to a sense of complacency, and be used to justify lax attitudes towards religious practice and monastic life. It was probably an awareness of such valid concerns that prompted strong criticisms of the teaching about the identity of mind and Buddha from within the Chan movement itself.

Huizhong voiced such criticism, when he apparently branded such doctrine, taught by "teachers from the South," as being heretical.[8] While there are unresolved problems about the authenticity of Huizhong's record and the exact object of his criticisms, his comments do touch upon important issues that arise from possible interpretations of the unqualified affirmation of the basic identity between the mind of ordinary people and the Buddha. It does seem, however, that, as suggested by Ishii, Mazu was not the direct object of Huizhong's criticism.[9] That seems to be the case in part

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[7] ZJL 14, T 48.492a.

[8] CDL 28.576. This criticism precedes his famous critical remarks about the unwarranted altering of the text of the *Platform Scripture*. For a discussion of Huizhong's criticisms, see Ishii's "Nanyō Echū no nanpō shūshi no hihan ni tsuite," in Kamata Shigeo hakushi kanreki kinen ronshu kankōkai, ed., *Chūgoku no bukkyō to bunka*, pp. 315–44.

[9] Ibid., pp. 326–27.

because monks associated with the Hongzhou School also voiced similar criticisms. Once such example is the following conversation between Nanquan and an anonymous monk.

A monk asked, "All the patriarchs until the great teacher from Jiangxi (i.e. Mazu) have taught that 'mind is Buddha' and 'Ordinary Mind is the Way.' Now the Reverend says that 'mind is not Buddha' and that 'wisdom is not the Way.' I have certain doubts about it. May the Reverend be compassionate enough to instruct me."

Nanquan replied in a loud voice, "If you are a Buddha, how can it be that you still have doubts and have to ask this old monk? I am not a Buddha, and I have not seen the patriarchs. Since it is you who is speaking in that way, you can go to seek the patriarchs by yourself."

The monk asked, "Since that is so, what kind of teaching can the Reverend offer to help a student [like me]?"

Nanquan said, "Quickly lift empty space with your palm."

The monk asked, "Empty space has no movable form. How can I lift it?"

Nanquan said, "When you say that it is without movable form, that is already a movement. How could empty space say 'I have no movable form?' These are all just your perverted views."

The monk asked, "Since [to say that] space is without movable form is just a perverted view, then what did you asked me to lift?"

Nanquan said, "Since you already know that one cannot speak about lifting it, how are you going to help it?"

The monk asked, "Since 'mind is Buddha' is not correct, is it that 'mind becomes Buddha?'"

Nanquan said, "'Mind is Buddha' and 'mind becomes Buddha' are just ideas created by your thinking. The Buddha is a person who has wisdom; the mind is the host who collects things. When confronted with things, they perform subtle functions. Do not conceive of mind and do not conceive of Buddha: whatever you conceive of, it becomes an object. This is the so-called 'delusion of knowing.' It is because of this that the great teacher from Jiangxi said, 'It is not mind, it is not Buddha, and it is not a thing.' He wanted to teach you, people of later generations, how to act. Nowadays students put on their robes and walk around doubting things that are of no concern to them. Have you attained anything that way?"

The monk asked, "Since 'it is not mind, it is not Buddha, it is not a thing' is not correct, what does the Reverend mean when he says 'mind is not Buddha, wisdom is not the Way?'"

Nanquan said, "Don't consider that mind is not Buddha and that wisdom is not the Way. I have no mind to bring. What are you going to attach to?"

The monk asked, "If there is nothing at all, then in which way is it different from empty space?"

Nanquan said, "Since it is not a thing, how can you compare it to empty space? Also, who spoke of sameness and difference?"

The monk said, "It cannot be that now 'it is not mind, it is not Buddha, it is not a thing' is not right!"

Nanquan said, "If you understand it that way, it just becomes 'mind is Buddha' again."[10]

Nanquan's seeming avoidance to give clear answers to monk's questions seem to be motivated by his concern that the real problem is the underlying assumptions that his questioner brings into the discussion. Nanquan demonstrates the untenability of those assumptions by throwing back the questions to the anonymous monk, and in this way indicating that pursuing the line of reasoning on which they are based leads into all sorts of questionable and/or untenable conclusions. In the end, Nanquan tries to point out that the true nature of the mind and its relationship with the Buddha cannot be predicated in any meaningful way. Any attempt to impute any characteristic to the "true" mind simply creates a delusory "object of (discriminating) knowledge." The role of a teacher like Nanquan is to disclose the futility of doing that, and to lead his students to eventually abandon all preconceived notions and views about the nature of mind and objective reality. It is only when all partial views are exhausted and when all discriminating mental processes come to an end that true vision of reality can take place.

In that sense, Nanquan seem to be in full agreement with Baizhang's advice to "go beyond the four possibilities of logic" propounded by the Mādhyamika School, and "realize emptiness."[11] Once any sort of interpretation about the relationship between mind and Buddha—be it that the mind is intrinsically enlightened, or that it can be transformed into the Buddha-mind through the application of methods of spiritual cultivation—becomes a source of attachment, it becomes an obstacle that prevents the

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[10] *Gu zunsu yulu* 12, XZJ 118.146b-c; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 109–11.

[11] BGL, XZJ 118.85c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 48.

un-localized intuitive wisdom of awakening to arise. Elsewhere, Baizhang raises a similar concern when he states:

> Just have no doctrines of existence, non-existence, and so on. Also have no views of existence, non-existence, and so on.... If you create a view about the Buddha or a view about the Dharma, or views about anything at all—existent, non-existent, or whatever—these are all called erroneous visions of those with eye disease. Because of what is seen, they are also called the enclosure of views, the lid of views, and also the affliction of views. [12]

Another criticism of one-sided attachment to the "mind is Buddha" supposition is also found in the record of Mazu's disciple Ruhui. There, Ruhui complains that after his teacher's death the compilers of his record (*yuben*) exclusively emphasized this tenet, thus presenting a misleading account of Mazu's teachings.[13] But perhaps the strongest criticism of the same views appears in a passage from Baizhang's record, where he states: "If one clings to 'original purity,' 'fundamental liberation,' and considers himself to be a Buddha, or considers his own self to be Chan and the path, then he belongs to the naturalist outsiders."[14]

It appears that self-centered criticism of the ideas of Mazu was in itself a characteristic of the Hongzhou School.[15] Such a critical attitude can already be found in the record of Mazu. As can be seen from the following discussion between Mazu and an anonymous monk, Mazu stressed the heuristic value of the theory of the identity of mind

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[12] BGL, XZJ 118.87a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 56. Also consider the following passage from BGL: "There has never been such a thing as Buddha—do not understand it as Buddha. 'Buddha' is a medicine for living beings. When there is no illness, one should not take medicine. When medicine and illness are both dissolved, it is like pure water." XZJ 118.83c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 34.

[13] ZTJ 15.338.

[14] BGL, XZJ 118.87b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 58.

[15] Ishii, "Nanyō Echū no nanpō shūshi no hihan ni tsuite," p. 324.

and Buddha. At the same time, he also indicated that it should not be interpreted literally or grasped as a final testimonial about the true nature of humanity.

> A monk asked, "Why does the Reverend say that mind is Buddha?"
> Mazu said, "To stop small children's crying."
> The monk asked, "What do you say when they have stopped crying?"
> Mazu said, "It is neither mind nor Buddha (*feixin feifo* 非心非佛)."
> The monk asked, "And when you have someone who does not belong to either of these two, how do you instruct him?"
> Mazu said, "I tell him that it is not a thing (*bushi wu* 不是物)."
> The monk asked, "And how about when you suddenly meet someone who is there?"
> Mazu said, "I teach him to directly realize the great Way."[16]

Though the authenticity of this passage is open to doubt, it does expresses an important point about the Hongzhou School's understanding of the use of religious doctrinal concepts.[17] Statements such as "mind is Buddha" or "neither mind nor Buddha" were not so much concerned with explicating the ontology of human mind, as they were with providing signposts to the actual course of religious practice.[18] As was made clear by Nanquan in the dialogue quoted above, such statements were made by Mazu in order "to teach people of later generations how to act," i.e. as guidelines about the course of spiritual practice. They served as heuristic devices that guided practitioners on a spiritual journey that presumably led to realization of reality that transcends the domain of

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[16] MY, XZJ 119.408b; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 78.

[17] Though there might be some uncertainty as to whether the dialogue is a record of an actual conversation (since it only appears in rather late sources), its contents probably represent Mazu's views quite accurately. That can be seen from the numerous discussions of the statements made in it in the records of Mazu's disciples, such as Baizhang, Ruhui, Nanquan, and Damei, some of which are quoted in these pages.

[18] Suzuki Tetsuo has argued that throughout his stay at Gonggong mountain Mazu taught only "Mind is Buddha," and developed the teaching of "neither mind nor Buddha" only after his move to Kaiyuan monastery in Hongzhou, during the final years of his teaching career. Suzuki, *Tō-godai zenshū shi*, pp. 379–81. I do not agree with Suzuki's arguments, which are based on suppositions that are not supported by convincing evidence.

conceptualization and cannot be predicated in words. Different formulations of the nature of the mind, which encompassed psychological but also metaphysical perspectives, served as motivational tools and guideposts that were meant to direct monks' spiritual energies in specific directions; each formulation was applicable to the particular point of the path to awakening they found themselves at a given time. Within these schemata, "mind is Buddha" was an elementary teaching that was meant to strengthen beginning students' faith, inspire in them a sense of confidence in their ability to achieve awakening, and teach them to direct the mental energies inwardly.

The teaching of "mind is Buddha," like other religious teachings, was an expedient device developed to aid students in their spiritual practice. Such understanding of its provisional function is succinctly expressed in the following statement attributed to Nanquan:

> When the reverend from Jiangxi (i.e. Mazu) taught that "mind is Buddha," that was only speech that was appropriate for a given occasion that was meant to cure the illness of busily seeking [the truth outside of oneself]. It was an expression that served as yellow leaves in an empty fist that are used to stop [small child's] crying. Therefore, he said, "it is not mind, it is not Buddha, and it is not a thing."[19]

Chan teachers were supposed to have mastery over the expedient ways in which such teachings were used, especially the manner in which they functioned to destroy attachments to particular ideas and steer practitioners' spiritual quest in appropriate directions. Such use is further elaborated in the record of the sayings of Damei, who according to popular lore was enlightened by hearing from Mazu the teaching about the identity of mind and Buddha. This text, which is not part of any Chan collection and is only extant as an ancient manuscript preserved in Kanazawa bunko in Yokohama, is

[19] ZTJ 16.351. See also the longer dialogue between Nanquan and an anonymous monk quoted above.

among the earlier records of the Hongzhou School's doctrines. The following passage explicitly deals with the issue we are concerned with here:

> When you simply do not place highest value on your bodies and lives, are not greedy for wealth and in love with others, do not follow various external conditions, do not give rise to lewdness, anger, and stupidity, [but instead] benefit all living beings—then that is "mind is Buddha." Have you seen the way of the Buddha? [As the *Vimalakīrti Scripture* says,] "Pure mind is the same as the Buddha mind, [even though] the body is same as that of an ordinary person." Though the Buddha is different [from ordinary people], his nature is not different. Moreover, the saying "neither mind nor Buddha" is also intended to break your attachment. If you talk about the mind, what kind of form does it have? If you talk about the mind/heart inside the body, it can be seen and it is subject to decay, so how can we speak about it being beyond birth and death? It is for the sake of destroying your attachments that "neither mind not Buddha" is spoken of.[20]

In the above paragraph, Damei explains that the realization of "mind is Buddha" implies development of mental purity. Purity here is defined in traditional terms, as absence of defilements such as greed, sensual love and/or sexual desire, anger, and stupidity, and presence of positive mental states, such as Bodhisattva's compassion and his aspiration to work for the benefit all creatures. When attachment to pure mind replaces attachment to external things or misguided views, then the act of denying the ultimate reality of either the mind or the Buddha—which implies that reality itself cannot be predicated in any manner whatsoever—destroys all fixations. This reality, which by definition is in some sense present in everybody, and yet whose existence must not be reified or conceptualized in an essentialist mode, is described by Baizhang in the following manner:

> Fundamentally, this principle is present in everyone. All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are called persons who point out a jewel. [But] fundamentally it is not a thing. You need not know of understand it; you need not affirm or deny it.

[20] *Mingzhou Dameishan Chang chanshi yulu*, in *Kanazawa bunko shiryō zensho: Butten 1, zenseki hen*, p. 16.

> Just cut of dualism. Cut off the supposition that it exists and the supposition that it does not exist. Cut off the supposition that it is non-existent and the supposition that it is not non-existent. When there are no traces on either side, then there is nether deficiency nor sufficiency, neither profanity nor holiness, neither light nor darkness. That is not having knowledge, yet not lacking knowledge; neither bondage nor liberation. It is not any name or category at all. Why is this true speech? How can you carve and polish emptiness to make an image of Buddha? How can you say that emptiness is blue, yellow, red, or white?[21]

To attempt to construe an image of reality is, as far as Baizhang is concerned, like trying to make a Buddha image from empty space. Since emptiness is the true body of the Buddha, it transcends all forms and concepts, and eludes all attempts to define it. In the passage following the last quotation. Baizhang quotes an unidentified source to further his argument that the true nature of reality cannot be predicated in a meaningful way: "Reality has no comparison, because there is nothing to which it may be likened. The dharmakāya is not constructed and does not fall within the scope of any classification."[22] Moreover, he also states, "From entering the stream [of enlightenment] all the way up to the tenth stage of the Bodhisattva path, as long as there are verbal explanations, they are all contained in the realm of affliction and trouble. As long as there are verbal explanations, they all belong to the incomplete teaching."[23]

Such an open-ended interpretative framework is further evidenced in the second adage closely associated with Mazu, "ordinary mind is the way." Unlike "mind is Buddha," Mazu first formulated this statement. With it Mazu did not try to make any qualitative assertions about the nature of the mind, or draw any rigid parallels between the consciousness of ordinary people and the state of Buddhahood. He simply stated, in a somewhat ambiguous manner, that the realization of absolute truth is to be found within,

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[21] BGL, XZJ 118.83c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 34–35.

[22] BGL, XZJ 118.83; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 35.

[23] BGL, XZJ 118.84b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 38.

or via the everyday mind of each person. As the true nature of reality permeates everything and is fully manifested in each thing and event, its realization does not presuppose leaving the ordinary world. Indeed, there is no other place where such realization can take place. Mazu explains:

> There is no place to stand where one leaves the Truth. The very place one stands on is the Truth; it is all one's being. If that was not so, then who is that? All things are Buddhadharmas and all things are liberation. Liberation is identical with suchness. All things never leave suchness. Whether walking, standing, sitting or reclining, everything is always the inconceivable function [of suchness/liberation].[24]

Mazu introduces the notion of "ordinary mind" in order to point to the proximity of an all-pervasive reality that permeates each and every phenomenon in the universe. Yet, he also refrains from precisely defining the nature of that reality, and from imputing to it any specific qualities or particular ontological status. In one of his sermons Mazu describes this "ordinary mind" in the following manner:

> The Way needs no cultivation, just preclude defilement. What is defilement? When with a mind of birth and death one acts in a contrived manner, then everything is defilement. If one wants to know the Way directly: Ordinary Mind is the Way! What does Ordinary Mind mean? [It is mind] that is devoid of activity, [notions of] right or wrong, grasping or rejecting, terminable or permanent, worldly or holy. The [*Vimalakīrti*] scripture says, "Neither the practice of ordinary people, nor the practice of sages, that is the Bodhisattva's practice." Just like now, whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, responding to situations and dealing with people as they come: everything is the Way.[25]

Here Mazu is not so much concerned with describing the true nature of the mind, as he is with trying to guide his students along a contemplative endeavor in which they are supposed to develop an uninterrupted state of mental awareness that is devoid of

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[24] MY, XZJ 119.406d; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 66.

[25] MY, XZJ 119.406c; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 65.

attachment to any dualistic concepts. Such a mental state is to be actualized in the midst of all activities of daily life, rather then through quietist withdrawal from the world and realization of states of meditative absorption, here symbolized by the sages who follow the Hīnayāna path to Nirvana. Full realization of such a state is the goal of spiritual practice. But at the same time, an active single-minded endeavor to maintain a state of awareness that approximates it as closely as possible is also a method of spiritual cultivation. Such a course of spiritual cultivation involves constant effort to abstain from giving rise to all forms of mental activities that run contrary to the pristine form of non-dual awareness that constitutes the essential function of the "ordinary mind." That is no other than the true mind stripped of the mental hindrances that obscure its sublime unobstructed function, as it reveals itself in every situation one might encounter.

Mazu's teaching about "ordinary mind" must be interpreted in the context of the religious life of the pious community to which it was given. Mazu was not necessarily rejecting the traditional regiments of spiritual discipline and monastic life, or repudiating the religious mores of his time. As we will see in the discussion of Chan and Buddhism monasticism presented in Chapters Nine and Ten, Mazu and his followers took for granted that disciplined monastic life was the best venue for spiritual practice. Moreover, the kind of monastic lifestyle they followed was that of mainstream contemplative monasticism, rather then a putative new Chan monasticism hypothesized in contemporary Zen scholarship.

The naturalness associated with "ordinary mind" was to be sought and actualized within the context of disciplined monastic life as led in a medieval Buddhist monastery. If we can speak of spontaneity at all, which might be something of a misnomer considering the institutional context with which we are confronted, it was certainly spontaneity of a very self-possessed and constrained type. Such spontaneity was realized

within the confines of existing social mores and institutional structures. There is little reason to assume that Mazu had in mind some sort of antinomian abandonment of conventions predicated on the notion that transgression of established norms is a way to demonstrate and/or communicate a liberated state of mind (notwithstanding what numerous volumes on Zen have to say about the subject). "Ordinary mind" was the mind of a spiritual adept who while living in the world in harmony with the restrictive predicament in which he found himself, was at the same time able to transcend the limitations of mundane existence and soar into the unobstructed realm of enlightenment.

### Paragons of Authentic Spirituality

The teachings of Mazu and his followers were presented as being primarily concerned with explicating the structuring and enactment of a course of religious practice that led to a realization of spiritual awakening. They were meant to evoke or strengthen a particular type of faith, provide inspiration, delineate the goals of religious life and the attitudes that accord with them, and instruct about the methods of spiritual cultivation. Considering this pragmatic orientation, when we discuss Hongzhou School's interpretations of the Buddhist path, we must consider the religious individuals to whom they were directed. Who constituted the audience for these teachings?

Though Chan training was (in theory at least) open to all, in actual practice it presupposed a disciplined and focused monastic lifestyle. That implied adoption of an austere religious way of life that was characterized by its clearly defined priorities, and its adherence to regimented and ritualized daily routines. The relationship between Chan practice and monasticism will be examined in the next two chapters, but for the sake of the present discussion I need to stress the fact that here we are concerned with doctrines and practices that developed within the living context of medieval monastic life. Chan

teachings for the most part had monks as their target audience, and their interpretation cannot be divorced from the religious mores and institutional ethos of Tang monastic life.

It is true that a number of highly placed officials came to study with Mazu, yet his only lay disciple to be recognized by the Chan tradition as a spiritual heir was Pang Yun. But Pang was far from being an ordinary layperson. In many important respects his life followed a pattern that closely resembled the life of a monk. We are told that although during his younger years Pang got married and had children, after he resolved to study Buddhism he supposedly got rid of all material possessions (an act that evoked monks' renunciation of all worldly things at the time of their ordination), and then went to study with Mazu and Shitou.[26] He then decided not to become a monk, a choice that might have been influenced by the fact that he already had a family. All the same, he still adopted a simple lifestyle and spent most of his time visiting various monasteries, consorting with monks, and composing religious poetry. His later fame was probably to a large extent due to the fact that the image of an enlightened Chan layman he came to represent was so rare and exceptional. But in essence even this paradigmatic layman was an unusual person who spend much of his time in monastic environment, and who adopted a semi-monastic lifestyle.

The primacy of the monastic ideal also becomes clear when we examine the religious views and practices of noted literati like Pei Xiu and Bo Juyi, both of whom studied with disciples of Mazu.[27] Pei's and Bo's biographical materials show that they both accepted monastic life as the most authentic religious lifestyle, and tried to model

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[26] One Chan text states that he loaded all his household possessions, amounting in value to several tens of thousands of strings of cash, onto a boat and sank them in the middle of a river. See Ruth Fuller Sasaki, at al., trans., *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*, p. 40.

[27] Pei and Bo's involvement with a number of disciples of Mazu was discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

their religious lives on those of the Chan monks with whom the associated, and whom they accepted as their spiritual mentors. Such an attitude is articulated in some of Bo Juyi's poems and writings, where he express his conviction that as long as he is entangled in worldly life he would not be able to go very far along the Chan path.[28] Towards the end of his life, as his devotion to Buddhism and commitment to spiritual life were growing stronger, Bo was seriously practicing Chan with Ruman and moving closer to a monastic lifestyle. That can be seen from a poem entitled "Half in the Family Half Out," composed in 840 during a period when he was living a quiet, semi-retired life in Luoyang. The term "family" that appears in poem's title refers to the Sangha, the community of Buddhist monks, and poem's title expresses the "betwixt-and-between" nature of his religious life during that period:

> Comfortably fixed for clothing and food, children married off,
> From now on I am not concerned with family matters.
> During night rest, I am like a bird that has found its way to the forest;
> At morning meals, I am one at heart with a monk going for alms.
> Clear cries, several voices—cranes under the pines;
> A spot of cold light—the lamp among the bamboo.
> Late at night, seated in the lotus position, I practice meditation.
> When my daughter calls, or my wife cries out, I do not answer either of them.[29]

In some of his other poems Bo also expressed the view that as a layperson with strong attachments to wine and poetry his prospects for the realization of enlightenment in the present lifetime were rather dim. It is apparent that Bo was well aware of his limited religious understanding and insight, and felt that in order to achieve full spiritual realization he had to become a monk and continue his religious practice in a future life.[30]

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[28] See Burton Watson, "Buddhism in the Poetry of Po Chü-i," *Eastern Buddhist* 21/1, p. 20.

[29] *Boshi houji* 16; translation adapted from Watson, "Buddhism in the Poetry of Po Chü-i," p. 22.

[30] See Watson, "Buddhism in the Poetry of Po Chü-i," p. 20.

Like his contemporary Pang, Bo also accepted the notion that the disciplined monastic way of life (or at least a lay life that closely approximated it) was the natural avenue for genuine religious practice.

How was the monastic ideal articulated in the records of Mazu and his disciples? Generally speaking, they actually have little to say about it (*Guishan jingce* being a notable, and very important, exception). The monastic context is simply assumed as a matter of course, as something that is so obvious that it needs no special mention (although it is considerably less obvious to modern scholars than it was to Tang Buddhists, who had direct experience of it). Nonetheless, there are scattered passages in the extant records that shed light on the images of authentic monastic life and practice that were current among Mazu and his disciples. The basic character of Chan's monastic orientation is described in the following passage from Baizhang's *Guanglu*.

> When a person who studies the Way [i.e. a monk] encounters all kinds of painful or pleasant, agreeable or disagreeable situations, his mind does not recoil. Not thinking about fame and profit, robes and food, and not being greedy for any merit and blessings, he is not obstructed by anything in the world. With nothing dear, free from love, he can equally accept pain and pleasure. He uses a coarse robe to protect himself from the cold, and simple food to support his body. Letting go, like a fool, like a deaf, like a dumb—it is only then that one gains some understanding. If one uses one's mind to broadly engage in intellectual study, seeking merit and wisdom, then all of that is just birth and death, and it does not serve any purpose as far as reality is concerned. Blown by the wind of knowledge, such person gets drowned in the ocean of birth and death.... If one could only for a lifetime keep a mind that is like a wood or stone, without being moved by the aggregates, the realms of sense, the entrances, the five desires,[31] and the eight winds,[32] then one cuts off the cause of birth and death, and is free to go or stay. Then such a person is not bound by any phenomenal causes and results, and is not hindered by any of the afflictions. At that time, because of himself being free, he

[31] The desires for wealth, sex, food and drink, fame, and sleep.

[32] The eight winds (or influences) consist of four pairs, and are: gain and loss, scorn and praise, fame and ridicule, and suffering and joy.

can help others by adapting to them and acting in beneficial ways.[33] With an unattached mind he responds to all things; with unobstructed wisdom he unties all bonds. This is what has been called "giving medicine according to illness."[34]

The image of the monastic ascetic presented in the above passage is a familiar one. That image resonates with deeply cherished, even if in actual practice often neglected, religious ideals that were lauded by the Buddhist canonical tradition. The religious values and sentiments expressed in it can be found in a broad range of monastic literature, from Indian and Central Asian, as well as Chinese provenance. The monastic ideal presented in it is actually quite conventional, and monks from virtually all Buddhist traditions that stress ascetic and contemplative values would readily agree with its general tenor. The pattern of religious life epitomized by it is formulated in terms of traditional monastic virtues, such as renunciation of fame, profit, and material things; detachment from ordinary human emotions, including love; development of mental equanimity; adoption of simple ascetic lifestyle (symbolized by coarse robe and plain food); and complete dedication of one's whole life to the sole purpose of achieving spiritual perfection, which in accord with the Bodhisattva ideal was to be dedicated to the benefit of all beings.

Similar emphasis on the traditional monastic ideal of the otherworldly ascetic unconcerned with mundane affairs is also evident in a passage from one of Wuye's sermons. There he urges his disciples to appropriate the ideal of the monks of yore who adopted austere eremitic lives, and who were wholly immersed in their spiritual practice, completely unwilling to bend their lofty religious principles in response to the demands of the secular world.

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[33] Adaptation to others and beneficial action, together with giving and kind speech, form the four all-embracing virtues of a Bodhisattva.

[34] BGL (*Sijia yulu* ed.), XZJ 119.411b-c; translation adapted from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 103–04.

> The way of our Chan School (*chanzong* 禪宗) is different. After the ancient worthy people of the Way attained realization, they went to live in thatched huts and stone houses. They would use old cauldron with broken legs to cook their food, and would pass twenty or thirty years in that way. Unconcerned about fame and wealth, they never thought of money and riches. Completely forgetting about human affairs, they concealed their traces among rocks and thickets. When summoned by the monarch, they would not respond; when invited by the princes, they would not go. How can they be same as those who, greedy for fame and desirous for wealth, sink into the worldly ways? That is like a peddler who by seeking small profit loses great gain. If the sages of the ten stages have not realized the principle of the Buddhas, then wouldn't they be like ordinary people with great learning? There is no such thing really.[35]

Such stress on an exclusive ideal of unworldly recluses is one of the main reasons for the ostensibly high-minded, but also rather abstruse descriptions of the path to awakening found in the records of the Hongzhou School. The apparent lack of sustained treatment of the concrete daily practices of Chan monks, including meditative practices, was a reflection of Hongzhou School's elitist orientation. To some extent that probably influenced the predisposition to record only those teachings that were supposed to be unique to Chan, and neglect the kinds of religious instruction that were part of the common Buddhist heritage. This tendency becomes clearer when we consider the status of the practice of formal meditation in the Hongzhou School.

As it is well known, formal practice of meditation was stressed by the Dongshan tradition of early Chan. For the most part the mediation practice taught by Daoxin and Hongren was rather conventional Mahayana contemplative practice.[36] Even though they

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[35] CDL 28.591; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 128–29. The above description of monastic life resonates with what we know about Wuye's own life. See Chapter Six.

[36] Daoxin taught the "one practice *samādhi*," which was based on the *Wenshu shuo jing*. It was similar to Zhiyi's constantly sitting *samādhi*, which was also based on the same scripture. For more on the advocacy of this *samādhi* by Daoxin and its place in the early Chan School, see Faure, "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch'an," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 105–09.

introduced a few new meditation techniques, these were modeled on established models of practice, and did not significantly deviate from other contemporaneous descriptions of sitting meditation. The same stress on the practice of sitting meditation was also characteristic of the Northern School, whose views about meditation practice were in general accord with the traditional views of northern Chinese Buddhism.[37]

The Niutou School, on the other hand, had a somewhat critical attitude towards the conventional practice of meditation. The extant sources seem to indicate that, beginning with school's putative founder Farong, Niutou teachers tried to distance themselves from the kind of meditative practices that were promulgated by their contemporaries. At the same time, the biographical records of the main teachers of this tradition show a predilection for contemplative lifestyle that seemingly contradicts outward rejection of formal meditation of the kind that seem to be conveyed in some of Niutou School's texts. As Shiina has suggested, Niutou's critique of meditative practice was meant to highlight qualitative differences between this tradition's contemplative practice and the practices of the Northern School.[38] But that need not be construed as a repudiation of the practice of meditation per se.

With Shenhui, there is for the first time clear rejection of the traditional conception of meditative practice. However, one cannot help but wonder how much that rejection was a part of his efforts to discredit the Northern School (which openly advocated meditation practice), rather than a sincerely-held belief about the true practice of Chan. A similar tendency to re-interpret the meaning of meditation in rather abstract terms is also found in the *Platform Scripture*. Because of the difficulty of tracing the

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[37] Shiina, "Nanshū no zazenkan to sono tokushoku," pp. 135-36.

[38] Ibid., pp. 136–37.

authorship of this text, it is unclear if Shenhui's thinking on the subject was to some degree affected by the views of his teacher Huineng, or whether the *Platform Scripture* was influenced by Shenhui's ideas.[39]

On the whole, the Hongzhou School's attitudes towards formal meditation were probably to some extent similar to those of the Niutou School. The lack of sustained discussion of the topic, and the interjection of occasional explicit criticisms of the practice in records of the Hongzhou School (though most of them appear in later and generally unreliable sources), do give the impression that the practice of formal meditation was not high on the spiritual agenda.[40] At the same time, Guishan's *Guishan jingce* (translated in Chapter Ten) clearly indicates that monks practicing in monasteries associated with the Hongzhou School engaged in a regimen of conventional monastic practices, of which meditation was an integral part. Furthermore, the only text associated with the Hongzhou School that directly deals with meditation, the brief *Zuochan ming*, attributed to Dayi, presents the practice of meditation in rather conventional terms.[41]

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[39] See Ibid., p. 137.

[40] A famous example of the Hongzhou Chan's criticism of the practice of formal meditation is the story in which Huairang compares Mazu's sitting in meditation with the intention of becoming a Buddha to polishing a brick in order to make a mirror. See Chapter Three. Furthermore, Yanagida has used a passage from one of Mazu's sermons to argue that he repudiated the practice of formal meditation. See Yanagida, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 452. The passage in question reads: "When there is no more false thinking, that is acceptance of the non-arising of all dharmas. Originally it exists and it is present now, irrespective of cultivation of the Way and sitting in meditation. Not cultivating and not sitting is the *Tathāgata*'s pure meditation." MY, XZJ 119.407a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-face Buddha*, pp. 68. As pointed out by Foulk, Yanagida misreads the passage, which simply asserts that the originally existing Buddha nature does not depend on the practice of meditation or any other spiritual exercise. As for the reference to "not cultivating and not sitting," that can probably best be interpreted as a cautionary remark about the correct practice of meditation directed to monks who were actually engaged in formal meditation. See Foulk, "The Ch'an School and its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," p. 127.

[41] *Zimen jingxun* 2, T 48.1048b-c.

Unfortunately, due to lack of reliable evidence, we are not in a position to know the extent to which formal meditation was practiced by Mazu and his followers. Nonetheless, I would like to suggest that the lack of sustained attention to the issue had less to do with a clearly construed and articulated anti-contemplative stance, but had more to do with the fact that they had little new to say about the topic. It seems probable that the actual contemplative practices they engaged in were little different from those of other contemplative traditions, both Chan and Tiantai, although they were integrated into a soteriological scheme that was specific to their tradition. This interpretation is supported by the following passage from *Baizhang guanglu*:

> If one were to speak to deaf worldly persons, then they should be told to leave home, keep the precepts, practice meditation, and study wisdom. To worldly people who are beyond ordinary measures—like Vimalakīrti and Bodhisattva Fu—one should not speak in that way. If one is speaking to *śramanas* (monastic renouncers), they have already committed themselves to the religious life[42] and the power of their *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā* is already complete. If one still speaks to them in that way, that is called untimely speech, because it is not appropriate to the situation; it is also called improper talk. To *śramanas* one should explain the defilement of purity; they should be taught to leave all things, whether existent or non-existent, to forsake cultivation and attainment, and also let go of the very notion of forsaking. If *śramanas* in the course of their abandonment of defiling habitual tendencies cannot let go of the diseases of greed and hatred, they are also to be called deaf worldly persons. In such a case they should also be told to practice meditation and study wisdom.[43]

The above paragraph indicates that ethical conduct and meditation practice are basic standards of religious life that are upheld by all true monks. Since they are widely accepted and familiar to them, they need not be particularly emphasized. Therefore, for

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[42] In its literal sense, the text refers to the procedure used to receive the Sangha's consent at its formal meeting (*jñapticaturtha-karman*). That is the monastic practice of requesting whole community's agreement on certain issues, like confession or ordination, by first making announcement, and then passing a motion three times.

[43] BGL, XZJ 118.82d.

monks and those layman who are sufficiently advanced, Baizhang offers the subtler Chan teaching that point to the realm beyond assertion and denial, cultivation and attainment. However, like his disciple Guishan, he adds that those who do not have a strong foundation in the observance of precepts and meditation should first dedicate themselves to the mastery of these essential practices, without which they are bound to go astray.

De-emphasizing discussion of basic Buddhist practices and observances in the extant documents does not have to be interpreted as evidence that they were not part of the religious program at Mazu's and his disciples' monasteries. Rather, they were the basic backdrop against which the more abstruse Chan teachings were enunciated. It is quite apparent that those teachings were directed towards monks who were already familiar with the basic Buddhist doctrines and practices. Therefore, the emphasis was on recording the "higher" Chan teachings, often described as being directed to those of "highest spiritual capacities." Those teachings were recorded because they were considered representative of Hongzhou School's unique standpoint. But, as Guishan's treatise makes it clear, most monks did not belong to the exalted category of those of highest spiritual capacities, and they had to be instructed accordingly.[44]

## Subitism Revisited

Discussions of Tang dynasty Chan doctrine commonly focus on the teaching of sudden enlightenment (*dunwu* 頓悟). Such a focus is predicated on the widely held assumption that this teaching was the most essential element of the new soteriological paradigm advocated by the Southern School of Chan, of which the Hongzhou School was the main representative. The notion of "sudden" together with its antipode "gradual" constitute a polarity which has been at the center of interpretative analyses of Chan doctrine and

[44] See Guishan's description of monastic practice presented in Chapter Ten.

practice. The bipolar modality of the sudden/gradual paradigm presents two supposedly contrasting visions of the nature of spiritual practice and experience. Among the two, as the doctrine of sudden enlightenment came to be associated with the Chan orthodoxy purportedly instituted by Huineng's Southern School, it was this vision that has been widely accepted as representing a superior and more authentic paradigm of Chan practice and realization. As such it is typically contrasted with the presumably inferior gradualist teachings imputed to Shenxiu's Northern School.

The purported clash between the two visions, dramatically told in the popular (apocryphal) story about the putative rivalry between the learned Shenxiu and the illiterate Shenhui narrated in the *Platform Scripture*, has recently been re-examined by a number of scholars. Among Western scholars, McRae and Faure have shown that the stereotypical depictions of the Northern School's teachings as advocating an inferior brand of gradualism have been rather simplistic, and to a large measure inaccurate. But notwithstanding such new developments in Chan scholarship, the continuous focus on the sudden/gradual paradigm still tends to grossly overestimate the actual importance of the two terms in the Chan teachings that were formulated during the mid-Tang period.

The putative close connection between the sudden paradigm and the classical Chan tradition that flourished during the mid-Tang period has been made even more problematic by the great attention paid to Zongmi's descriptions of the teachings of the various Chan lineages. In his writings not only does Zongmi identify Mazu and his followers as teaching sudden enlightenment, but he also claims that they advocated a radical approach to practice that he terms "sudden cultivation" (*dunxiu* 頓修).[45] To

[45] Basing himself on ideas briefly introduced in the writings of his teacher Chengguan (where they are buried in a large mass of scholastic details), Zongmi applied the concepts of sudden and gradual to both practice and awakening. The pairing of the two concepts yielded a total of five approaches to

accept Zongmi's analysis at face value, however, demands that one ignore the strong polemical backdrop against which he formulated his arguments. This is not the place to delve into the historical background of Zongmi's analysis of the teachings of the different Chan schools. But we need to note that his evaluation of their respective merits and demerits, though undertaken in a supposedly ecumenical spirit, had an unstated sectarian agenda that in my opinion had much more influence on his thinking than has been assumed so far.

In order to establish a hierarchical ordering of the various Chan lineages—which incidentally bolstered his claim to be the main spokesperson for the "orthodox" lineage of Chan— Zongmi drew arbitrary connections between various Chan teachings on one hand, and theoretical models he appropriated from Chengguan and earlier taxonomies of the doctrines of canonical Buddhism on the other. This intellectual exercise obscured as much as revealed the full range of doctrinal positions adopted by specific Chan schools. For example, his identification of the Northern School's doctrine with that of the Faxiang type of Yogācāra was rather simplistic at best, and quite misleading at worst.[46] Though Zongmi apparently had collected a substantial amount of materials about the doctrines of the various Chan lineages and his depictions of them were for the most part accurate, his

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religious life. Among the five, he presented the "sudden awakening and sudden cultivation" (*dunwu dunxiu* 頓悟頓修) approach as corresponding to the Hongzhou School'. In contrast, Zongmi himself championed the "sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation" (*dunwu jianxiu* 頓悟漸修), which he (somewhat misleadingly) identified with Shenhui. See Peter Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi's Analysis of Mind," in Gregory, ed. *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, pp. 282–84. For a discussion of Chengguan's writings on this topic, see Yoshizu Yoshihide, *Kegon zen no shisōteki kenkyū*, pp. 249–64.

[46] For summary of Zongmi's critique of Northern School's doctrine, see Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 231–34.

critical analysis and evaluation of their teachings was clearly clouded by his own partisan subjectivity.

Lurking behind Zongmi's ostensibly judicious scrutiny of the various Chan teachings was an apparent desire to establish a new sense of Chan orthodoxy based on the putative teachings of Shenhui. Having previously misconstrued his spiritual lineage in order to establish himself as the rightful heir of Shenhui (or at least having expediently adopted a lineage that was previously misconstrued by others), Zongmi's perspective was not that of a mere historian of Chan who assumed the socially-acknowledged role of a maker of impartial judgments.[47] Rather, his standpoint was that of a very ambitious cleric who worked hard at establishing himself as the main, indeed sole, representative of Chan orthodoxy among his contemporaries. Part of his strategy was to bring down the Hongzhou School, the main Chan lineage of his time, by inaccurately depicting its teachings as advocating an untenable "sudden practice and sudden awakening" paradigm, and demonstrating the superiority of Shenhui's (actually Zongmi's own) "sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation" paradigm.[48]

The polemical use of such notions as "sudden awakening" or "sudden teaching" were of course by no means restricted to Zongmi. It appears that such popular terms were, as noted by McRae, more frequently used as identifying slogans rather than as doctrinal positions with explicit contents. The notion of sudden enlightenment was widely accepted because it was a flexible and appealing motto whose practical

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[47] For discussions of the (mis) constructions of Zongmi's spiritual lineage, see Hu Shi 胡適, "Ba Pei Xiu de 'Tang gu Kuifeng Dinghui chanshi chuanfa bei'" 跋裴休的唐故圭峰定慧禪師傳法碑, in Jiang Yihua 姜義華, ed., *Hu Shi xueshu wenji: Zhongguo foxue shi* 胡適學術文集—中國佛學史, pp. 229–43; Yanagida, "Jinne no shōzō," ZBKK 15 (1988), pp. 215–42; and Ogawa Takashi 小川隆, "Shūmitsu denbō seikei sankō" 宗密傳法世系再考, ZBKK 24 (1999): 67–82

[48] For a summary of Zongmi's presentation of these two approaches, see Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 192–96, 236–44.

applications were very malleable to a wide range of interpretations.[49] Sometimes the idea of suddenness was skillfully used to highlight the non-conceptual character of the "realization" of reality. In that context it served to counteract attachment to the view that there is a mechanical correlation between the means used (i.e. the practices that constitute the Buddhist path) and the final goal of spiritual life (the realization of the un-localized and indescribable realm of awakening). The notion of suddenness was also employed to impose a conceptual structure to the ineffable experience of awakening. But such interpretations made sense only when they were presented to monks already engaged in actual religious training—which was intrinsically gradual in character, notwithstanding all the indigenous sophistry employed to show otherwise. As such, notions of suddenness served mainly to prevent monks engaged in Chan training from grasping or misconstruing the goals and procedures of their practice.

The problem with the subitist perspective, especially when it is applied to such problematical notions as "sudden cultivation," is that it undermines the possibility of articulating the kind of coherent presentations of the exigencies of actual religious experience that are indispensable in the training of actual people. As pointed out by Gregory, the apophatic rhetorical posture of subitism holds the danger of being interpreted in ways that undermine actual religious and ethical practice.[50] Because of that, emphasis on subitism is more suited to polemical discourse, such as that used during Shenhui's anti-Northern School campaign, but is of less relevance to the actual daily practices performed in actual monastic communities. The notion of suddenness fits nicely with the evangelical character of Shenhui's mission, in which the focus was on

[49] McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," in Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual*, pp. 256–57.

[50] Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation," p. 308.

conversion to his vision of Chan orthodoxy, rather then on offering coherent guidance about actual spiritual cultivation that was to follow the initial conversion experience.[51] That was probably not a problem for Shenhui, who apparently was not concerned with the actual training of disciples. Nevertheless, the incongruity between the more radical forms of subitist rhetoric and the actual realities of spiritual training is certainly one of the main reasons why subitism plays a much smaller role in those Chan texts that are actually concerned with explicating the internal dynamics of religious practice and experience. That includes the extant sermons and other writings of Mazu and his disciples.

Though there is no doubt that ideas associated with the sudden approach were current within the Hongzhou School, they were not nearly as prominent as later commentators have usually assumed. The term "sudden awakening" appears only once in *Mazu yulu*, in a passage where Mazu talks about "sudden awakening to the original nature" (*dunwu benxing*).[52] The same terms also appears in the title of Dazhu's *Dunwu yaomen*. But even there, although the treatise begins with a brief discussion of sudden awakening, the same term appears in only three other passages, and as a whole the text is not really concerned with a discussion of this topic.[53] Rather, the term is used as one of the catchwords that commonly refer to the Chan teaching. Its appearance in the title of Dazhu's treatise can be explained as another instance of its emblematic use. It is even possible that the term did not appear at all in the original title, which might have been changed into the present form at some later date. Furthermore, the term "sudden awakening" appears only once *Baizhang guanglu*, as part of a question posed to Baizhang

[51] McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," p. 254.

[52] MY, XZJ 119.406b; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 64.

[53] See *Dunwu rudao yaomen lun*, in Hirano Sōjō, trans., *Tongo yōmon*, pp. 24, 60, 90–91.

rather then in a statement made by him, and in a section that might not have been part of the early edition of his record.[54] The same term also does not appear in Huangbo's two records.[55] Considering the paucity of its usage, and the manner in which it is employed when it does appear in the extant records, it is hard to justify the traditional and current interpretations of the centrality of the concept of "sudden awakening" within the Hongzhou School's doctrine.

As to the notion of "sudden cultivation," which Zongmi uses to describe Mazu's approach to religious practice, neither the term nor any similar term appears even once in any texts associated with the Hongzhou School. Whenever the notion of subitism is evoked, it is always associated with the experience of awakening. In that sense it either describes the manner in which the experience occurs (an all-at-once realization, rather then a gradual unfolding of knowledge/awareness of reality), or points to the nature of the experience itself. In the second sense, the term is used to describe awakening as an immediate realization of the absolute, which is an indivisible whole (often expressed as the Buddha nature inherent in everybody).

As Faure has pointed out, the term *dun* was also used in the sense of "unmediated." In this context it qualifies the experience of awakening as being realized without the mediation of spiritual practices, the *upāya* that according to Shenhui's (unjustified) criticisms were mistakenly used by Shenxiu and his followers as means to an end.[56] Faure also notes that, in contrast to Shenhui, whose criticisms reflected the

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[54] The pertinent section does not appear in the *Gu zunsu yulu* edition of the text, but it is added to the *Sijia yulu* edition. See XZJ 119.411a.

[55] The character dun appears six times in *Chuanxin fayao* and *Wangling lu*, in each case forming the first part of compounds such as *dunliao*, "to comprehend/realize suddenly" (twice), and *dunzhao*, "to all-at-once go beyond/transcend" (also twice).

[56] Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*, p. 36.

aforementioned sectarian/polemical framework of his arguments and his lack of serious consideration to the exigencies of actual practice, "Northern Chan masters recognized the unavoidable contradiction between their theoretical 'subitism' and the concrete necessities of spiritual guidance."[57]

Notwithstanding the occasional criticisms of uncritical reliance on *upāya* found in Hongzhou School writings (especially in Huangbo's records)—which can be better understood as warnings about the appropriate use of *upāya*, rather then as their outright rejection—the position of Mazu and his followers was much closer to that of the Northern School than to that of Shenhui. Mazu criticized *upāya*-centric approaches, which assumed that mechanical performance of spiritual practices (like sitting meditation), devoid of the wisdom that intuits their empty nature, can automatically lead to the "attainment" of liberation. The problem with such approaches was that they were based on a mistaken assumption that the realization of Nirvana is a direct result of religious practices. Such understanding failed to grasp the unconditioned nature of absolute reality which, as Mazu points out, "originally exists and it is present now, irrespective of cultivation of the way or sitting in meditation."[58]

From the perspective of absolute truth, it might be possible to assert that there is no direct correlation between the cultivation of spiritual practices and the realization of liberation. Mazu seems to make that point when he states that "The Way does not belong to cultivation. If one speaks of any attainment through cultivation, whatever is accomplished in that way is still subject to regress. That is same as the [way of the]

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[57] Ibid. This tension was of course not restricted to Chan. For an example of how Zhiyi dealt with it in the context of meditative practice, see Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 80–81, 85.

[58] MY, XZJ 119.407a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 68.

*śrāvakas*."[59] But that assertion is only one side of the coin, and does not constitute Mazu's final and unqualified repudiation of the utility of spiritual practices.[60] Mazu continues the previous quotation by emphasizing that, "If one says that there is no need for cultivation, that is the same as ordinary people."[61] Bodhisattva's "practice" is unlike that of the ordinary people, who do not see the need to practice at all. At the same time, it also differs from the practices of the *śrāvakas*, who attach to their practices, get caught-up in the realm of dualistic opposites, and mistakenly reify their goal.[62]

Such a description of the path of spiritual cultivation is not as unconventional and inventive as it might seem at first sight. In fact, it evokes the depiction of the Bodhisattva path in the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures. There the Bodhisattva is portrayed as a tireless spiritual warrior who is fully engaged in the cultivation of all perfections that constitute the path to Buddhahood. At the same time, such a comprehensive course of spiritual training is grounded on the "taking up" of the perfection of wisdom, through which the Bodhisattva realizes the emptiness of all dharmas (including the practices he/she is engaged in).[63] While the Bodhisattva never abandons the practice of the other five perfections, it is through the application of insight into their lack of self-nature, cultivated through the perfection of wisdom, that he/she avoids grasping all practices and misconstruing their true nature and function. The scripture explains this point in a manner similar to Mazu (who no doubt was familiar with its description of the Bodhisattva path):

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[59] MY, XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 63.

[60] See Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 498.

[61] MY, XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 63.

[62] MY, XZJ 119.406c; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 65.

[63] Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary*, pp. 103, 111, 188.

> Even if a Bodhisattva, after he has raised his mind to full enlightenment, would, for countless eons, give gifts, guard his morality, perfect his patience, exert in vigor, and enter the trances, how ever great may be his setting forth and the thought which he raises to full enlightenment, if he is not upheld by perfect wisdom and lacks in skill in means, he is bound to fall on the level of Disciple or Pratyekabuddha.[64]

Grasping *upāya* might be mistaken, but so is their indiscriminate rejection. The falsity of naïve attachment to the notion of original enlightenment (*benjue* 本覺), whereby one assumes that he/she is already enlightened, was clearly expressed by Baizhang, who stated: "To attach to original purity and original liberation, to consider oneself to be a Buddha, to be someone who understands Chan [without actually engaging in practice], that belongs to the way of those heretics who deny cause and effect, and hold that things happen spontaneously."[65]

To assume that the realization of ultimate reality is a direct result of specific practices is wrong, but it is equally mistaken to assume that one can achieve Chan enlightenment by not engaging in arduous practice. The challenge posed by Mazu and Baizhang is to find a balance between the two. The successful practitioner has to exploit the creative tension created by the conflict between the apprehension that all practices lack self-nature on the one hand, and the understanding that it is only through their perfection that awakening can be realized on the other. Such tension then becomes the driving force behind authentic practice that avoids extremes and harmoniously integrates both perspectives.

To sum up, the term "sudden" is rarely used in the records of the Hongzhou School, and in most instances it is used in reference to the experience of awakening. The same term is not linked with depictions of the actual process of practice that precedes

[64] Ibid., p. 196.

[65] BGL, XZJ 118.87b; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 22.

awakening. Quite to the contrary, in Hongzhou School's records there are many passages that depict the course of Chan practices in unmistakably gradualist terms. Let us turn to some of those descriptions of the path to awakening.

### Stages of the Path

In one of his descriptions of the path to awakening, Baizhang compares spiritual practice to the washing of dirty robe: "You should study in the following manner: study is like washing dirty robe. The robe is originally there, while the dirt comes from outside."[66] It is unclear exactly from which source Baizhang adopted the analogy between religious practice and the washing of dirty robe. The simile of the dirty robe is undoubtedly very ancient. It originated even before the first introduction of Buddhism to China, as can be seen from the *Vatthūpama Sutta* in the Pali canon, where it originally appears.[67] Just as in the Pali sutta, which elaborates on the Theravada path of gradual purification that leads to the realization of Nirvana, in the above quotation Baizhang describes the process of spiritual practice as removal of impurities (such as greed, anger, envy, and so on) that stain the mind. The mind—like the cloth from which the robe in the simile is made—is intrinsically pure, whereas the impurities that sully it are extrinsic to it (as explained by the tathāgatagarbha theory). Therefore, spiritual cultivation consists of abandonment of the extrinsic dirt that taints the mind, the origin of which can be traced to the forming of attachments to external objects (lit. "sounds and forms"). When one abandons those mistaken attachments and the deluded mental processes that engender them, explains

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[66] BGL, XZJ 118.85a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 43.

[67] See Ñānamoli and Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses*, pp. 118–20.

Baizhang, one's "mind becomes like empty space," free from the imperfections that result from its being sullied by extraneous defilements.[68]

It is interesting to note that Baizhang's position expressed in the above quotation is to some extent analogous to the one presented by the famous verse from the *Platform Scripture* (falsely) attributed to Shenxiu. In that verse, contemplative practice is compared to a diligent effort to wipe dust from the surface of a mirror in order to keep it clean.[69] Like the robe mentioned in the previous simile, the mirror's surface is originally clear. The dust that needs to be removed comes from outside, and thus it is extrinsic to the mirror, whose essential characteristic is its ability to clearly reflect images. At the same time, Baizhang's statement is also in agreement with the second verse in the *Platform Scripture*, (also falsely) attributed to Huineng. In contrast to the first verse, this verse asserts that since the Buddha nature is always pure, there is no place where any dust can gather.[70] Like the author of the second verse, Baizhang was aware of the danger of reifying defilements and misconstruing them as being real. Therefore, he stressed that although the practice envisaged by him involved abandonment of defilements, which was actualized by realization of their lack of intrinsic reality that brings about letting go of them, rather than by a gradual process of expunging them from the mind. In the final analysis, all efforts to obliterate mental defilements and thus purify the mind from their unwholesome influences are based on a mistaken assumption that there are real defilements that need to be removed.

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[68] XZJ 118.85a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 43.

[69] See Yampolsky, trans., *The Platform Sūtra*, p. 130.

[70] Ibid., p. 132. For the traditional interpretation of the two "mind verses," see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 1–7.

Baizhang's implicit acceptance of the two seemingly diverging views conveyed by the two competing verses from the *Platform Scripture*—although he was not discussing the two verses per se—indicates that they need not be interpreted as advocating two diametrically opposed paradigms of religious practice, "gradual" and "sudden," as understood by the later Chan tradition.[71] Rather, the two verses can be understood as shedding light on two complementary aspects of a single balanced approach to religious practice. One should constantly engage in contemplative practice and keep the mind "clear like empty space," maintaining mindfulness and letting go of impurities as soon as they arise, whilst also comprehending the causal factors that are behind their creation. At the same time, one should not conceptualize or cling to the various mental states that are experienced, or attach to the meditative process itself.

One of the main themes of *Baizhang guanglu* is the progress along the stages of the path to awakening. Baizhang describes Chan practice as involving three distinct mental states/conditions (*sanju* 三句) that correspond to three distinct stages of the path.[72] The three states are hierarchical and progressive: in each successive state the practitioner enters a higher form of awareness that results from renunciation of the subtle forms of clinging that characterized the previous stage. In that sense, each successive state implies realization of a superior mental state that to a greater degree accords with the perfect awareness of the Buddha. Baizhang describes the first state (stage) as follows:

> One should distinguish the terms of purity and defilement. Defiled things have many names, such as greed, aversion, love, grasping, and so on. Pure things also

[71] See McRae, "Shen-hui and the Teaching of Sudden Enlightenment," p. 228.

[72] Here the term *ju* is not used in it usual sense—sentence or part of a verse (used to translate the Sanskrit term *pada*)—but in the less commonly-used sense of a state or condition, used in phrases such as "the condition of enlightenment." Cleary translates the term as "phase," which is an acceptable rendering. See his discussion of the term in Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 104–05, n. 20.

> have many names, such as awakening (*bodhi*), Nirvana, liberation, and so on. But the present mirror-like awareness should, amidst the two streams of pure and defiled, profane and holy, amidst forms, sounds, smells, and physical sensations, amidst mundane and supramundane phenomena, have not the slightest love or grasping for any anything at all. When one no longer loves or grasps, but abides [in the state] of absence of love and grasping and considers that to be correct, that is the elementary good. That is abiding in subdued mind. Such a person is [like] a *śrāvaka*, or [like] a person who has become so fond of the raft [that had taken him to the other shore] that he cannot give it up.[73] That is the way of the two vehicles [of *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*], and that is the result of meditation.[74]

At this initial stage of the path, the practitioner cultivates absolute detachment from all phenomena. Although such a person has the ability to clearly distinguish between pure things (examples of which include the elements of the Buddhist path) and impure things (which include all unwholesome mental qualities that cause one to be reborn in samsara), he is not attached to any of them. Amidst all circumstances, the adept subdues his/her mind, and adopts a dispassionate frame of mind that is characterized by absence of any kind of clinging. Such a person has made excellent progress towards the complete obliteration of the ten states of impure mind, which Baizhang defines as "greedy mind, lustful mind, defiled mind, angry mind, clinging mind, dwelling mind, dependent mind, attached mind, grasping mind, and longing mind."[75]

Nonetheless, the attainment of this kind of dispassionate mental state, which is the direct result of meditative cultivation, is not the final goal of religious practice. That is the case because such a state of utter detachment within itself harbors slight imperfection, inasmuch as the "abiding in subdued mind" entails a subtle form of clinging to nonattachment as a final state of numinous repose. In order to go beyond this inherent

[73] The simile of the raft appears in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*; see Ñānamoli and Bodhi, trans., *The Middle Length Discourses*, 228–29.

[74] BGL, XZJ 118.82d–83a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 30–31.

[75] BGL, XZJ 118.90c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 77.

limitation of the initial stage, at the second stage of the path the practitioner needs to lets go of the peaceful dwelling in the refined mental state of complete dispassion and detachment that was attained at the preceding stage. Baizhang describes the second stage of the path as follows:

> Once one does not grasp anymore, and yet does not dwell in nonattachment either, that is the intermediate good. That is the half-word teaching. [But] that is still the formless realm. Although such persons avoid falling into the way of the two vehicles, and [also] avoid falling into the way of demons, that is still [a form of] meditation illness. That is the bondage of the bodhisattvas.[76]

At the second stage, which Baizhang calls the "intermediate good," the practitioner forsakes dwelling in nonattachment. Nonetheless, although even that subtle form of spiritual grasping has been abandoned, he/she has not yet realized a state of perfect freedom from all metal impediments. That is the case because there is still a sense of self-awareness and understanding of the relinquishment of dwelling in mental detachment, and the realization of a purified state of non-discriminating awareness. In order to completely free the mind from all hindrances that prevent the arising of the perfect wisdom of Buddhahood, the advanced adept must let go of the very awareness/understanding that he has forsaken even the subtlest forms of attachments. That final act of letting go constitutes entry into the third (and final) stage of the path:

> Once one does not dwell in nonattachment anymore, and does not even engender any understanding of not dwelling in it either, that is the final good. That is the full-word teaching. Such a person avoids falling into the formless realm, avoids falling into meditation illness, avoids falling into the way of the bodhisattvas, and avoids falling into the condition of king of demons. Because of hindrances of knowledge, hindrances of stages, and hindrances of practice, seeing one's Buddha nature is [as difficult as] seeing forms at night. As it has been said, at the stage of Buddhahood one obliterates two forms of ignorance: the ignorance of subtle knowledge, and the ignorance of extremely subtle knowledge. Therefore it has

[76] BGL, XZJ 118.83a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 31.

> been said [in the *Huayan Scripture*] that a man of great wisdom smashes an atom to bring into the world a volume of scripture.[77]

It is only at the third stage that the mind becomes completely free of even the subtlest forms of impediments. As all forms of ignorance are expunged from the mind, including the subtlest forms of knowledge and views that obstruct the wisdom of Buddhahood from manifesting itself, the goal of the spiritual path is finally consummated. Such a person, according to Baizhang, is beyond any kind of confinement or bondage. He finally actualizes the potential for perfection inherent in each person, and thus he is a "Buddha having Buddha nature."[78] The realization of such perfect spiritual freedom, however, is not an attainment of some special numinous state that is radically disjoined from each person's ordinary mind. The course implied here is not so much a process of acquiring some special knowledge or power, but of freeing the mind from even the subtlest forms of attachments and conceptualizations. A mind thus freed is capable of intuitive apprehension of "a principle that is originally present in everyone."[79] That principle cannot be cognized or conceptually apprehended, because it is no other then the principle of emptiness, which no suppositions can fully encapsulate or explicate. As Baizhang explains,

> Fundamentally it is not a "thing." One does not need to know or understand it. One does not need to affirm or deny it. Just get rid of all dualism: get rid of the supposition that "it exists" and the supposition that "it does not exist."[80] [Also] cut

[77] BGL, XZJ 118.83a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 31. The famous simile of a wise man bringing into being a volume of scripture from an atom comes from the "Manifestation of the Tathāgata" chapter. See T 10.272c, and Cheng-chien, trans., *Manifestation of the Tathāgata*, pp. 105–06.

[78] BGL, XZJ 118.83a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 31.

[79] BGL, XZJ 118.83c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 34.

[80] Elsewhere Baizhang explains that "To say that sentient beings have Buddha nature is to slander the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. To say that sentient beings have no Buddha nature is also to

> off the supposition "it is nonexistent" and the supposition that "it is not nonexistent."[81] When traces do not appear on either side, then there is neither deficiency nor sufficiency, neither profanity nor holiness, neither light nor darkness. That is not having knowledge, yet not lacking knowledge, not bondage and not liberation. It is not any name or category at all.[82]

By transcending all suppositions about the nature of reality, one goes beyond all self-imposed limitations and obstructions, and realizes a state of perfection where such dualistic opposites like bondage and liberation, or knowledge and ignorance, become meaningless. The true vision of reality implies transcendence of all views, because "when one has no views of existence, nonexistence, or whatever, and yet does not lack vision, that is true vision."[83] At that point, as in the simile of the raft from the Pali canon, having served their purpose, all teachings are abandoned. That must be done, explains Baizhang, because "at the stage of Buddhahood there is neither observance nor transgression [of any spiritual norms or practices], and neither the complete nor the incomplete teaching are admissible."[84]

To sum up Baizhang's description of the path to awakening, the practitioner realizes three distinct states of awareness. Each state corresponds to different stage of a three-tiered path, and each successive state bringing the adept closer to realization of the final goal of spiritual life. At the first stage, the emphasis is on perfect detachment from everything. That is followed by letting go of the dwelling in such a state of total detachment, which defines the second stage of the path. Finally, the whole process

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slander the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha." BGL, XZJ 118.84a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 39–40.

[81] The going beyond the four possibilities of logic and the realization of emptiness are also discussed in another passage in BGL, XZJ 118.85c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 48.

[82] BGL, XZJ 118.83c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 34–35.

[83] BGL, XZJ 118.87c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 59.

[84] BGL, XZJ 118.84b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 38.

culminates with the third stage, when even the understanding/awareness of such non-dwelling in detachment is abandoned and perfect spiritual freedom is realized.[85]

These three stages represent three steps on a progressive path of freeing the mind from increasingly subtler forms of mental attachments and other impediments. While each succeeding stage goes beyond the previous stage by transcending its inherent limitations, nonetheless a higher stage does not constitute a complete repudiation of the lower stages. Rather, the constituent elements of the lower stages are fully integrated into the higher stages, which express a more complete and holistic vision of reality. In that sense, the final stage includes all three stages in their entirety. The whole process culminates in a direct non-dual realization of the all-inclusive realm of reality. Such unobstructed vision is predicated on the realization of the two-fold emptiness of person and things, one of the foundational doctrines of Mahayana Buddhism. As Baizhang explains, "If someone wishes to be immediately awakened, then he should just let both person and things disappear, let both person and things be obliterated, let person and things be both empty. Then, passing through the three stages, that is called someone who does not fall within any categorization."[86]

**The Realm of Awakening**

As is to be expected, Chan texts do not provide comprehensive and nuanced depictions of the realm of awakening of the kind we find in the writing of such scholiasts like Fazang and Chengguan. Instead, there are a number of brief statements scattered throughout the extant sources that shed light on various facets of the "inconceivable" vision of

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[85] For additional passages where Baizhang explicates the three stages, see BGL, XZJ 118.84a, 84d, 86d, 87b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, pp. 37, 41, 47, 55, 57.

[86] BGL, XZJ 118.88a; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 62.

enlightenment. A typical example is Baizhang's terse description of the experience of awakening:

> When the pure and impure minds are both ended, there is no dwelling in bondage, nor is there dwelling in liberation. There is no mindfulness of doing or non-doing, bondage or liberation. Although it is still within [the realm of] birth and death, such mind is free. Ultimately it does not commingle with all the vanities, empty illusions, sensual passion, the mortal clusters and the element of existence, life and death, and the sense media. Transcendent and without abode, nothing at all constrains it. It comes and goes through birth and death as through an open door.[87]

Here the actualization of perfect spiritual freedom is defined primarily in terms of what is abandoned. The passage provides little that can serve as an explicit clue about what the vision of the "mind without abode" might be like. Baizhang's statement does makes it clear that such a mind is purified from the impurities (such as ignorance and sensual desires) that cause each person to experience samsaric existence. The mind is set free as it abandons the tendency to misconstrue reality in terms of the bifurcation of experience in terms of conflicting and mutually negating opposites.

The realization of spiritual freedom involves transcendence of mundane existence, but that experiences still takes places within the confines of phenomenal reality. After all, as follows from the Huayan vision of a single unobstructed *dharmadhātu*, the enlightened adept realizes that in their essence "all phenomena are one with the ultimate principle."[88] The notion of religious awakening is introduced only because of deep-seated human ignorance about the true nature of reality. Once ignorance disappears, one simply sees all things as they truly are. Mazu explains:

> It is in contrast to ignorance that one speaks of awakening. Since originally there is no ignorance, awakening also need not be established. All living beings have

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[87] BGL (*Sijia yulu* ed.), XZJ 119.411b; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 79.

[88] MY, XZJ 119.406a; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 62.

> since limitless eons ago been abiding in the samādhi of the Dharma-nature. While they are in the samādhi of the Dharma-nature, they wear their clothes, eat their food, talk, and respond to things. As they make use of the six senses, all their activity is the Dharma-nature.[89]

In a profound sense, all beings partake of the true nature of reality, even if most of them are not aware of that. The Buddhist sage is a person who realizes that all-pervasive truth, which fully manifests in each and every phenomenon in the universe. The Chan adept becomes enlightened without leaving the everyday world, and he remains aware of the manifold distinctions that shape everyday life. Though in that sense he is able to function in the world, such a person is described as someone who goes beyond all limitations. As indicated in the last quotations from Baizhang's record, such person acquires the ability to control his coming and going in the continuous cycle of birth and death.

Such mastery over samsara implies an ability to put an end to the whole sequence of future rebirths. Yet, the Buddhist sage chooses not to use that prerogative. He decides to stay in the world because the perfection of the path and the rising above all constrains is not understood merely as a private act of personal liberation. In accord with the altruistic ethos of the bodhisattva ideal, the experience of enlightenment has wider social implications, as it sets the stage for the selfless activity dedicated to the spiritual salvation of one's fellow human beings. Such a person, although having cut off the causes that lead to continuous rebirth in samsara, remains fully immersed in the ways of the world. He appears as spiritual benefactor who "responds to all creatures with an unattached heart, opens all fetters with unhindered wisdom."[90] He thus helps others also to go beyond their self-imposed limitations, and realize the sublime magnificence of enlightenment in all of its all-encompassing wholeness, brilliance, and perfection.

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[89] MY, XZJ 119.406b; Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 64.

[90] BGL (*Sijia yulu* ed.), XZJ 119.411c; Cleary, trans., *Pai-chang*, p. 80.

## Concluding Remarks

Following the ideas of his famous teacher, in his record Baizhang presents a compelling vision of a path to spiritual awakening. Although all we now have are snapshots of that vision—which is due to the fact that the extant records are random collection of short sermons or excerpts from longer addresses—they all point to a coherently structured body of religious doctrine that was characteristic of the mid-Tang Chan movement. It is interesting to note that Baizhang distances himself from the kind of problematic epistemology that is implied by the act of "seeing the nature and achieving Buddhahood," which is one of the main themes in the *Platform Scripture* and Shenhui's sermons. Though his formulation of the three stages of Chan practice is a creative new development in the evolution of Chan doctrine, in its basic structure and content it is predicated on rather mainstream insight into central Mahayana doctrines. The end result is an innovative soteriological paradigm that steers away from some of the more extreme excesses of Chan subitism, and is in substantial agreement with the Buddhist canonical tradition.

The momentous success of the Hongzhou School had much to do with the fact that its leaders expressed their vision of the Buddhist path to spiritual enlightenment in ways that were fresh and forceful, and yet at the same time that evoked some of the deepest insight and most cherished ideals of the Buddhist tradition. But the messengers were perhaps as important as the messages they conveyed to their medieval audiences. In the end, the success of those ideas cannot be separated from the personal appeal of Mazu and his great disciples, who were readily embraced as Chan's new vanguard by their contemporaries. The Chan teachings presented here must be considered together with the story of the lives of Mazu and his disciples. That story (which was recounted in chapters

three through six) shows how in addition to the introduction of compelling new ideas, the establishment of the Hongzhou School as the main tradition of Chan Buddhism depended on the compelling religious personalities and individual commitment of the monks who spread those ideas throughout most of the Tang empire.

The ideas of these monks (and the later repackaging and reinterpretations of those ideas) eventually reached very large audiences and were perceived as having universal appeal, as can be seen from the enduring popularity of classical Chan throughout East Asia. But we have to keep in mind that originally those ideas were formulated in a very specific context, and for the most part were promoted locally, namely in the monasteries where individual Chan teachers resided. Furthermore, although Chan ideas about practice and realization might have been based on the religious experiences of monks like Mazu and Baizhang, the ways they were articulated were undoubtedly shaped by the religious ethos and practical concerns of the communities in which they originated, and to whom they were primarily addressed. It is to those religious communities that I now turn my attention, as in the last two chapters I bring the present study of the Hongzhou School to a completion by examining the institutional context in which the Chan doctrines presented here were construed and transmitted.

Chapter 9

# *Chan and Monastic Institutions*

The Hongzhou School is usually characterized as an iconoclastic tradition that rejected traditional Buddhist morality and repudiated mainstream monastic mores and regulations. Currently-prevalent interpretations and views about the unbridled, spontaneous nature of Chan religiosity suggest that iconoclastic acts that contravened conventional patterns of behavior were representative of important aspects of Hongzhou School's practice. The prevailing view about Hongzhou School's reputed rejection of traditional monastic morality is further reflected in most scholarly discussion of the institutional background in which Chan monks from the early ninth (or even earlier, according to some interpretations) pursued their religious vocation. Virtually all Japanese scholars (as well as their Western counterparts) presume that Hongzhou School's supposedly novel moral stance—which is evidenced in numerous iconoclastic encounter dialogue stories—was related to its revolutionary conception of the Buddhist path. Such an uncompromising attitude suposedly resulted in the Hongzhou School's brave effort to separate itself from mainstream monastic institutions and develop a new system of monastic life and practice. The emergence of the putative new "Chan monasticism," according to such interpretations, was a culmination of the Sinification of Buddhism. Such development is further described as a reflection of the influence of the Chinese "practical mentality," which in major respects was supposedly incompatible with the foreign monastic system inherited from Indian Buddhism.

In this chapter, I will critically examine the arguments and the evidence marshaled by Japanese scholars in support of their contention that Chan rejected conventional monasticism and became institutionally independent from the mainstream ecclesiastical structures of Tang Buddhism. As I examine those views by highlighting the problems with the sources on which they are based and the untenability of the presuppositions that underlie them, I will also try to determine the nature of the relationship between the Hongzhou School and the Buddhist monastic tradition. Keeping in mind the conservative impulses noted throughout my examination of the history of the Hongzhou School and my analysis of its religious doctrines, here I will examine whether in an institutional sense it might be more correct to look at the Hongzhou School as an integral part of mainstream monastic Buddhism, rather than as a rebellious movement that tried to subvert the established norms of religious life in Tang China.

It is reasonable to assume that the Hongzhou School's doctrinal outlook and its approach to Buddhist soteriology (which I described in the last two chapters) to a large degree expressed Mazu's and his disciples' religious experiences. At the same time, the Hongzhou School's doctrines and practices were parts of a larger Sinicized tradition of Buddhism, and were shaped by the social and institutional milieus in which they were formulated and enacted. In this chapter, I will examine the monastic context in which Chan monks developed and taught their doctrines and led their religious lives, and survey their attitudes towards the institutions of medieval Chinese monasticism. The main issues with which I am concerned can be framed as follows. First, what were the typical patterns of communal life and prevalent religious mores in mid-Tang monasteries headed by Chan monks? Second, to what extent did monastic life in them converge with, or differ from, the life in other Buddhist monasteries in the Tang?

I will begin by examining the well-known Chan legend that depicts Baizhang as the originator of a unique form of Chan monasticism. I will then consider the prevalent scholarly views about the putative establishment of Chan School's institutional "independence" from the rest of the Chinese Buddhist monastic order, and try to locate the place of the Hongzhou School within the overall context of Tang monasticism. In section three I will examine the emergence of the earliest rules written by Chan monks during the late Tang period. As I situate these rules within the broad context of Chinese monastic institutions' continuous transformation, I will try to determine the manner in which Chan monks participated in the gradual evolution of Chinese monasticism. At the end of the chapter, I will broadly delineate the institutional context of Chan practice, and highlight the importance of seeing Chan as an integral part of mainstream monastic Buddhism, rather than as a completely new radical movement that flourished in opposition to mainstream monastic institutions.

This chapter is closely related to the last chapter, "*Guishan jingce* and the Moral Character of Chan Soteriology." That chapter presents *Guishan jingce* 潙山警策, Guishan's treatise on monastic life, which is the only text produced by the Hongzhou School that directly deals with monastic institutions and ideals and describes their relationship with Chan soteriology. Because this treatise offers strong support to the main arguments about the relationship between Chan and Buddhist monasticism presented in this chapter, the two chapters should ideally be read together.

**The Legend About Baizhang's "Rules Of Purity"**

One of the most enduring and best-known parts of Chan lore is the legend about Baizhang's codification of a new system of monastic rules. The creation of Chan monastic rules that is described by the legend is usually interpreted as a momentous event

that in an institutional sense defined the emergence of Chan as an independent religious movement. The later Chan and Zen traditions in China and the rest of East Asia honored Baizhang as a great monastic innovator whose rules were subsequently accepted by the whole Chan movement as a set of standards that guided and regulated a form of monastic life that was peculiar to the Chan School. Because of his supposed role as the codifier of the first system of Chan monasticism, from the early Song dynasty onward Baizhang was widely perceived as one of the most important monks in the history of Chan, whose stature equaled those of Bodhidharma, Huineng, and Mazu.[1]

The earliest text that makes the connection between Baizhang and the creation of Chan monastic rules is *Song gaoseng zhuan* (compiled in 988). There, in Baizhang's biography, Zanning ( the author of *Song gaoseng zhuan*) describes the creation of Chan monastic rules in the following manner:

> [Following the creation of a monastic community at Baizhang mountain by monks who came there in order to study with Baizhang,] he said, "We practice the teachings of Mahayana. How can we accept the teachings of the Agamas as practices that should be followed?" Someone said, "*Yuqia [shidi] lun* 瑜伽師地論 (*Yogācāra-bhūmi*) and *[Pusa] yingluo [benye] jing* 菩薩瓔珞本業經 contain the Mahayana precepts. Why not follow them?" [Huai]hai (i.e. Baizhang) said, "We should consider and extract what is appropriate from both the Mahayana and Hīnayāna [precepts], and create [a system of] regulations that lead back to virtue." Thereupon, he conceived the idea of separately establishing a Chan monastery (*bieli chanju* 別立禪居) that would not follow the Vinaya regulations (*buxun lüzhi* 不循律制).... The Chan School everywhere was like

[1] An example of the later tendency to exalt Baizhang's achievements as a monastic legislator is "Baizhangshan dazhi shoushengsi tianxiashi biaogeji" 百丈山大智壽聖寺天下師表閣記, a short text that is appended at the end of *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, the influential Chan monastic manual composed in 1336. There Baizhang is compared to Bodhidharma, the putative "founder" of Chan Buddhism. T 48.1157b-c.

grass bending under [strong] wind; the independent practice of the Chan School (*chanmen duxing* 禪門獨行) started with [Huai]hai.[2]

Zanning makes no mention of the sources he used for Baizhang's biography, but his brief description of the rules instituted by Baizhang is similar to *Chanmen guishi* 禪門規式, a short text of uncertain provenance which is appended to Baizhang's hagiography in *Jingde chuandeng lu*.[3] While there is considerable overlap between the two texts, the *Chuandeng lu* version is considerably longer, and it provides a more detailed description of the rules that were supposedly instituted by Baizhang, which following later usage are commonly referred to as "the rules of purity" (*qinggui* 清規).[4] Although *Chuandeng lu* was compiled sixteen years after *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning probably used an earlier edition of the text that Daoyuan (the author of *Chuandeng lu*) added to Baizhang's biography in his collection.[5] The provenance and authorship of *Chanmen guishi* is not

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[2] SGSZ 10, T 50.770c. Cf. Theodore Griffith Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School' and its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," pp. 347–48. A short account of Baizhang's establishment of separate Chan monastery can also be found in Zanning's short history of Buddhist monasticism in China, the *Da Song sengshi lüe* 大宋僧史略 (c. 978–999). See the section entitled "Bieli chanju" 別立禪居, T 54.240a–b.

[3] CDL 6.117 (T 51.250c–251b). For English translations and brief studies of *Chanmen guishi*, see Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 328–83, and Martin Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule: *Ch'ing kuei* and the shaping of Ch'an Community Life," in Whalen Lai and Lewis Lancaster, eds., *Early Ch'an in China and Tibet*, pp. 173–78.

[4] The expression "*qinggui*" itself does not appear in the CDL version of *Chanmen guishi*. Nonetheless, the term was already in vogue during the eight century, and initially its use was not associated with the Chan School. The term appears in one of Dufu's 杜甫 (712–770) poems, as well as in Bukong's 不空 (705–774, a.k.a. Amoghavarja) *Daizong chaozeng sikong dabianzheng guangzhi sanzang biaozhi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏表制集 (T 52.830c). See Kondō Ryōichi 近藤良一, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei" 百丈清規の成立とその背形, *Hokkaidō Komazawa daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 3 (1969), p. 27, and Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki zenshū shisho no kenkyū*, p. 484, n. 24.

[5] See Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 340. It is not clear, however, whether *Chanmen guishi* was included in the original version of CDL compiled in 1004. It is possible that the text was added to

clear, and it is also conceivable that both Zanning and Daoyuan quoted some third source, which might have had a different title.

Following its first appearance in *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu*, the image of Baizhang as a great monastic regulator and a seminal figure in the history of Chan was widely accepted by the Chan School during the Song and the subsequent dynasties, as well as by the Sŏn/Zen traditions that flourished in Korea and Japan. Starting with *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, the oldest extant Chan monastic code compiled by Changlu Zongze 長蘆宗賾 in 1103, the authors of virtually all Chan monastic manuals acknowledged Baizhang as the originator of Chan monastic rules.[6] Both Zongze and Dongyang Dehui 東陽德輝, the compiler of *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, the influential monastic code presented to the Yuan 元 (1271–1368) throne in 1336, paid homage to Baizhang as the original codifier of Chan monastic life. They both also claimed that they were updating and expanding the original rules created by Baizhang, rather than creating something new.[7] Moreover, at the ends of these two monastic codes their compilers appended short sections that purportedly described Baizhang's original rules. In the case of *Chanyuan qinggui*, Zongze added a short section entitled "Baizhang guisheng song" 百丈規繩頌,[8] while at the end of *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* there is "Gu qinggui xu" 古清規序, which is presented as a preface to

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Baizhang's biography by some of the editors who prepared the later revised edition. In any case, the text did obviously exist in some form during Daoyuan's lifetime, as the quotation in Baizhang's biography in SGSZ shows.

[6] For a copy of this text, see XZJ 111.438–471. For an anotated Japanese *yomikudashi* rendering, see Kagamishima Genryū 鏡島元隆, et al., eds., *Yakuchū—Zennen shingi* 譯註—禪苑清規.

[7] For the text, see T 48.1109–60.

[8] XZJ 111.465d–69a, and Kagamishima, ed., *Zennen shingi*, pp. 340–87.

Baizhang's old rules written by Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), the Hanlin scholar who was involved in the revision of the original text of *Chuandeng lu*.[9]

However, on closer examination the contents of "Baizhang guisheng song" and "Gu qinggui xu" turn out to be quite similar. They are evidently both based on the same source, which is none other than the *Chuandeng lu* version of *Chanmen guishi*. This suggests that neither Zongze nor Dehui had a copy of another text of monastic rules attributed to Baizhang, but instead had to rely on *Chanmen guishi* as the only text that presumably had some sort of direct connection with Baizhang's regulations.[10] In the final analysis, it turns out that the earliest and only evidence that Baizhang was involved in the creation of monastic rules that were subsequently accepted by Chan monasteries comes from his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan* and the *Chuandeng lu* edition of *Chanmen guishi*. *Song gaoseng zhuan*, the earlier of them, was composed 174 years after Baizhang's death in 814. Thus, all references to Baizhang's rules found in later texts that belong to the "rules of purity" genre are based on *Chanmen guishi*, compiled long after Baizhang's lifetime, not on some lost text authored by Baizhang.[11] Moreover, we know nothing about the origins and authorship of this text, and we are not in a position to reliably judge the authenticity of its description of Chan monastic life and Baizhang's role

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[9] T 48.1157c–58b. For Yang Yi and his involvement in the revising of CDL, see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshū shi no kenkyū*, pp. 8–21.

[10] See Kagamishima Genryū, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi" 百丈清規の成立とその意義, (Aichi Gakuin Daigaku) *Zen kenkyūjo kiyō* 6 & 7 (1976), p. 117. Concerning the use of the term *Baizhang qinggui*, which appears in the title of *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui*, in *Chanyuan qinggui* there is no reference to a text bearing that title. The earliest appearance of the term can be traced to sometime around the second part of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century. See Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei," p. 27.

[11] Ishii, "Hyakujō kyōdan to Isan kyōdan (zoku)" 百丈教團と潙山教團續, p. 289b.

in its creation. All we know about its origins is that it was composed before 988, the year when *Song gaoseng zhuan* was compiled. Considering *Chanmen guishi*'s late date and uncertain provenance, the text is hardly an unquestionably trustworthy source of information about Chan monastic practice during the Tang. *Chanmen guishi*'s contents have to be used with great care, and specific pieces of information presented in it should be corroborated with other earlier evidence before they can be used as historical materials for the study of Tang Chan.

There are no Tang sources that confirm *Song gaoseng zhuan*'s description of Baizhang's role in the creation of Chan monastic rules. The earliest source on Baizhang's life, his stele inscription composed in 818 (four years after his death) by Zhen Xu, makes no mention of Baizhang's involvement in the creation or recording of any kind of monastic rules.[12] The exclusion of this kind of information in the stele inscriptions of medieval Chinese monks is not highly unusual, and in itself it does not constitute strong evidence that he did not indeed create some sort of rules for his monastery. Nonetheless, in Baizhang's specific case, if he did create and/or wrote down a set of monastic rules, the absence of any mention of them in the stele inscription is somewhat suspicious when we consider that Zhen did write about the compilation of Baizhang's records (*yuben* 語本) by two of his disciples, Shenxing 神行 and Fanyun 梵雲.[13]

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[12] QTW 446.2014a–b. For a Japanese translation of the inscription see Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," *Komazawa daigaku zenkenkyūjo nenbō* 6 (1995), pp. 20–23.

[13] QTW 446.2014a. According to Zhen, Baizhang's *yuben* also included letter(s) about the Buddha nature (*foxing* 佛性) that Baizhang wrote to another monk. Okimoto Katsumi 沖本克己 has argued that a passage in Baizhang's stele inscription shows that he created new Chan monastic rules. See Okimoto, "Shingi kenkyū nōto" 清規研究ノート, in Sasaki Kyōgo 佐々木教悟, ed., *Kairitsu shisō no kenkyū* 戒律思想の研究, p. 426, and Idem, "Hyakujō kogi ni tsuite" 百丈古規について, ZBKK 12 (1980), p. 54. Okimoto's argument is somewhat peculiar. I am not quite sure how he (mis)reads the passage from Baizhang's inscription quoted by him as an evidence for his assertion that

Baizhang's biography in *Zutang ji* also makes no mention of the new monastic rules or of Baizhang's role as a monastic legislator.[14] Similarly, there is no mention of Baizhang's creation of Chan rules in any other sources from the Tang period, including Zongmi's writings and the stele inscriptions and other records of his disciples and other contemporaries.[15] Moreover, Baizhang's rules are also not mentioned in *Guishan jingce*, Guishan's treatise on monastic discipline that will be the focus of the next chapter. As we will see, Guishan not only makes no mention of any new rules instituted by his own teacher, but he also clearly stresses the role of the Vinaya as a guiding set of principles governing the daily life and religious practice of the monks in his monastery, and presents a vision of monastic life that is very much in accord with the mainstream views of ninth century Chinese monasticism. If Baizhang did indeed create any specific Chan rules, it is difficult to imagine that his best-known disciples either would not know about them, or would choose completely to ignore them.

Despite the late dating of the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu* accounts of Baizhang's creation of Chan monastic rules, and the conspicuous lack of any corroborating evidence from the Tang period, Baizhang's role as the codifier of new system of Chan monasticism has been widely accepted by Japanese scholars. Under the thinly disguised influence of the traditional beliefs and sectarian concerns of the Japanese Zen sects, with whom virtually all Chan/Zen scholars in Japan are in some way

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Baizhang wrote a monastic code, but there is really nothing in it to suggest that Baizhang created and/or wrote any new rules, or that he was in any way involved in the codification of monastic life. See also Kondō's criticism of Okimoto's reading of the same passage in his "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin" 百丈清規成立の要因, *Indo tetsugaku bukkyōgaku* 2 (1987), pp. 241–42.

[14] See ZTJ 14.317–21.

[15] See Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei," pp. 23–25.

connected, Japanese scholars have enthusiastically embraced the notion that a distinctive Chan style of monastic life emerged during the Tang. Most of these scholars have also accepted the legend about Baizhang's creation of new regulations as a historical event. They have even in various ways enhanced the image of Baizhang as a codifier of Chan monastic life in ways that go well beyond what one finds even in the most sectarian Chan literature from the Song period.

Often, by unconsciously reading issues that informed the ideological constructions of their own Zen traditions' historical narratives, Japanese scholars have uncritically embraced the *Chanmen guishi*'s ambiguous account of Baizhang's establishment of a "separate Chan monastery" to argue that during the Tang the Chan School developed as an "independent sect" of Chinese Buddhism. Thus, in addition to assuming that Chan developed its unique set of religious beliefs and practices, without a single noticeable exception all Japanese scholars have postulated that from the Tang dynasty onward Chan monasteries were institutionally separate from the rest of Chinese Buddhism, and were organized according to a system of monastic regulations that was unique to the Chan School. Japanese scholars have offered various interpretations of the earliest origins of Chan monasticism and the details of Baizhang's actual and symbolic roles in the codification of Chan monastic rules. Notwithstanding slight differences in interpretation of historical details, the very notion that during the Tang period the Chan School began to develop a distinct sectarian identity—very much akin to the identities developed by the Japanese Sōtō and Rinzai sects from the Kamakura period onward—continues to be recognized as an established fact in contemporary Japanese Chan/Zen studies.

Concerning Baizhang's supposed role in the codification of Chan monastic life, many scholars have assumed that Baizhang did create, and most probably wrote down, a

specific set of rules for his monastery. Before long, those rules were widely adopted as guiding standards for the organization and day-to-day administration of Chan monasteries.[16] Some scholars have suggested that these rules—of which no copy has survived, and for which there is no evidence to shown that they ever existed—were lost before the beginning of the Song dynasty, while other scholars have postulated that Baizhang's rules were still in circulation at the time when *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu* were compiled. According to the second interpretation, a copy of these early rules was the original source on which *Chanmen guishi* was based.[17] Ui Hakuju 宇井伯壽, the early pioneer of modern Chan studies, argued that both the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu* versions of *Chanmen guishi* were based on the same text authored by Baizhang, which he referred to as "The Pure Rules of Baizhang" ("Hyakujō shingi" 百丈清規).[18] Other scholars have referred to the same monastic manual as "The Old Rules of Baizhang" ("Hyakujō kogi" 百丈古規, or some similar variant), thus distinguishing it from the late Chan codes written in the "rules of purity" genre.[19] While

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[16] Examples of variations on this general view can be found in Ui Hakuju, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 375–95; Ōishi Shuyū 大石守雄, "Ko shingi ni tsuite" 古清規について, ZK 44 (1953), pp. 81–88; Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," and Idem, *Zennen shingi*, pp. 1–3; Yanagida, "Chūgoku zenshū shi" 中國禪宗史, in Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, ed., *Zen no rekishi: Chūgoku* 禪歷史—中國, pp. 58–60, and Idem, "Goroku no rekishi," TG 57 (1985), pp. 250, 472, 548; Suzuki Tetsuo, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 142–43; Sato Tatsugen 佐藤達玄, *Chūgoku Bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū* 中國佛教における戒律の研究, pp. 479–89; Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文獻の研究, pp. 469–76; Ishii, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa*, pp. 212–26. Views similar to those of Japanese scholars can also be found in Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 148–51.

[17] Ui, *Zenshū shi kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 375–76, and Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," p. 119.

[18] For examples of the use of this term, see the two works referred to in the previous note.

[19] For an example of this usage, see Okimoto, "Hyakujō kogi ni tsuite."

most of these scholars have assumed that Baizhang's original rules once existed but were subsequently lost, Okimoto Katsumi 沖本克己 has speculated that we still have a copy of the original text composed by Baizhang. According to him *Chanmen guishi* itself is the text that was written by Baizhang.[20]

The assertion that Baizhang wrote down a set of monastic rules that were subsequently adopted by the whole Chan School was first challenged by Kondō Ryōichi 近藤良一. In two long articles, he pointed our that there is no evidence from the pre-Song period that indicates that there ever was a text about monastic rules that was actually written by Baizhang.[21] Yet, while Kondō doubts that Baizhang ever wrote an actual text in which he codified the monastic rules he supposedly instituted at his monastery, like most other scholars he still accepts the view that Baizhang did create new monastic rules.[22] Although these rules were never written down, and thus there was no original text of *Baizhang qinggui* authored by Baizhang, according to Kondō's interpretation, Baizhang's unrecorded rules were soon widely adopted by the larger Chan community, and thus became the basis for the emergence of distinct form of Chan monasticism. As these unwritten regulations were becoming more widely used, gradually many additional layers of new rules and procedures were added to them. These changes reflected the cumulative experience of the evolving Chan monastic traditions. It was this

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[20] Okimoto, "Shingi kenkyū nōto," pp. 425–27, and "Hyakujō kogi ni tsuite," p. 53.

[21] Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei," pp. 17–48, and Idem, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," pp. 231–46. A brief summary of some of the main points made in the first article can be found in Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule," pp. 171–72.

[22] Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei," pp. 22–23.

enlarged and altered corpus of Chan rules that developed prior to the early Song period that became the basis for *Chanmen guishi.*[23]

Kondō also attempted to deduce the contents of the original rules established by Baizhang by trying to cull a "pure" core of rules from the layers of later materials found in such texts as *Chanmen guishi* and *Chanyuan qinggui*. Kondō's somewhat arbitrary process of deducing Baizhang's original "pure rules" from the later adulterated representations of Chan monastic life, such as those found in Song texts that belong to the "rules of purity" genre, is based on an untenable set of predetermined ideas about what ideal Chan monastic life must have looked like.[24] Furthermore, this idealized picture or pure Chan monastic life is reinforced by selective quotations from a host of apocryphal

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[23] Ibid., p. 30. Kondō suggests that these changes—which reflected a prolonged and gradual process of codification of Chan monasticism that spanned from the introduction of Baizhang's original rules at the beginning of the ninth century to the creation of *Chanmen guishi* during the mid-tenth century—were due to changes in political, social, and economic circumstances during the Tang-Song transition, as well as due to the inner transformation of Chan thought. Ibid., p. 31. According to Kondō—who follows the popular topos of the Chan School's gradual fall from its pure origins—this process of change was a process of secularization of Chan, which led to lowering of Chan monks' spiritual standards and loss of the original purity of the Chan teachings. In the economic sphere, these changes were manifested as a shift from Baizhang's model of self–supporting monastic community to a monastic system that primarily relied on the financial support of wealthy donors, which was very much like the old system against which Baizhang supposedly rebelled. With their extensive land holdings and commercial activities, Song Chan monasteries apparently abandoned the spiritual purity that characterized Chan monasticism of Baizhang's time, and were greatly secularized in comparison with their Tang predecessors. Ibid., p. 32, 38. In the intellectual and religious spheres, these changes manifested in the tendency to introduce many elements of Pure Land Buddhism into the supposedly "pure" Chan tradition. Ibid., pp. 39–40, 42. Needless to say, Kōndo's views about a pure Chan tradition that existed during the Tang period but was gradually corrupted by the Song dynasty, which are shared by many other scholars, reflect the influence of later Chan/Zen ideologies on his conception of the history of Tang Chan.

[24] See Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei," pp. 32–33. For a germane criticism of this approach, which is also adopted by other Japanese scholars, see Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" pp. 300–01.

Chan stories culled from Song collections that make passing mention of various aspects of Tang monastic life. Kondō's work raises valid questions about the existence of an elusive monastic manual written by Baizhang. At the same time, he still basically affirms the prevalent view that during Baizhang's lifetime the Chan School developed its own code of monastic rules (albeit an unwritten one) and started to function as an independent sect.[25]

The most significant efforts to debunk the legend of Baizhang as a codifier of Chan monastic rules undertaken so far by a Japanese scholar are Ishii Shūdō's 石井修道 recent articles about the historical development of "Baizhang's Rules of Purity." Following upon Kondō's criticism of the unwarranted assumptions about Baizhang's authorship of the non-existent *Baizhang qinggui*, Ishii convincingly argues that Baizhang was not directly involved in the codification of any new monastic rules.[26] He also suggests that before the compilation of *Song gaoseng zhuan* and *Chuandeng lu* there was no text with monastic regulations that had any direct connection with Baizhang. Moreover, the term "Baizhang qinggui" was not used to refer to the Chan rules that existed at that time when *Chanmen guishi* was created.[27]

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[25] Kondō seems to even vacillate on the issue of Baizhang's authorship of the original text of *Baizhang qinggui*, which supposedly contained the first Chan rules. In a later article Kondō makes his lingering doubts quite explicit, when he states that *Baizhang qinggui* was compiled abound 800, contradicting his earlier assertion that Baizhang never wrote any such text. See Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," p. 237.

[26] Ishii, "Hyakujō kyōdan to Isan kyōdan (zoku)," pp. 292–95, and Idem, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," pp. 18, 36, 53.

[27] Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," p. 53.

In his examination of the origin of Chan monastic rules, Ishii presumes that such rules were gradually created by the later generations of abbots at Baizhang mountain. The process of creation of Chan monastic rules was not confined to Baizhang mountain, as other Chan communities created other sets of monastic rules.[28] Nonetheless, according to Ishii, the basis of *Chanmen guishi* were the rules created at Baizhang mountain after the end of Wang Xianzhi's (d. 878) rebellion. After the rebellion ended, the monastic community at Baizhang mountain was restored by monks associated with the Caodong School 曹洞宗, whose main center at Dong mountain 洞山 was very close to Baizhang mountain. Mingzhao (Myŏngjo in Korean) 明照 (d.u.), a native of Korea and tenth generation abbot of Baizhang's monastery, was a member of the Caodong lineage.[29] Daochang 道常 (d. 991), the eleventh-generation abbot of the monastery, received ordination from Mingzhao, but later became a disciple of Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958), the putative founder of the Fayan School 法眼宗, who was the leading Chan monk in the Jiangxi area during the middle part of the tenth century.[30] Ishii speculates (without really providing convincing evidence) that it was during Fachang's tenure as an abbot at Baizhang mountain that a set of Chan rules was codified and recorded. He concludes that it was the text of these rules that was used as a basis for the earliest edition of *Chanmen guishi*.[31]

Ishii further expands his argument to suggest that the rules created under Fachang were continuing a tradition of Chan monastic practice that can be traced back to the time

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[28] Ishii, "Hyakujō kyōdan to Isan kyōdan (zoku)," p. 295.

[29] For Mingzhao, see CDL 20.399.

[30] Ishii, "Hyakujō shingi no kenkyū," p. 39.

[31] Ibid., p. 53.

of Baizhang Niepan 百丈涅槃 (d. 828?), a disciple of Baizhang who was the third generation abbot at Baizhang's monastery.[32] During Niepan's tenure as an abbot, the first monastic regulations were created. Those regulations were subsequently transmitted by the later generations of monks who resided at the same monastery until the time of Daochang, when they were finally codified. Though Ishii denies that Baizhang directly participated in the codification of Chan monastic rules, he still assumes that Baizhang was the author of the basic principles that defined all later Chan rules, such as the institution of the practice of communal work (*puqing zuowu* 普請作務) and the notion that appropriate parts from both the Mahayana and the Hīnayāna precepts should be accepted as guiding principles of Chan monastic life.[33]

Ishii's speculation about the gradual emergence and codification of Chan monastic rules under the later generations of abbots of Baizhang mountain, and about the relationship between these rules and *Chanmen guishi*, are at present little more than interesting hypotheses. Without substantiating evidence, his arguments about these specific issues are not entirely convincing, and further research needs to be done on the origins of the legend about Baizhang's codification of the first Chan monastic rules. Moreover, like other scholars he still sees the creation of Chan monastic regulations as an unmistakable sign that by the end of the Tang the Chan School was institutionally independent from the mainstream ecclesiastical structures of medieval Chinese Buddhism. On the other hand, as far as Baizhang's role in the establishment of a new

[32] Ibid., pp. 39–43, 53.

[33] Ibid., pp. 50– 53.

system of Chan monasticism is concerned, Ishii makes a convincing argument that Baizhang was not involved in the codification of any kind of monastic rules.

We can infer that the legend of Baizhang as the father and patron saint of Chan monasticism gradually emerged sometime during the late Tang or the Five Dynasties (908–960) periods. The development of the legend might have coincided with the emergence of Baizhang as the main disciple of Mazu. The perception of Baizhang as Mazu's most illustrious disciple was a noticeable enhancement of his stature within the Hongzhou School, when we consider that during his lifetime he was but one of Mazu's many outstanding disciples. The elevating of Baizhang's historical status within Tang Chan was associated with the increasing fortunes of his disciples. The popularity of the Guiyang lineage during the late ninth century and the flourishing of the Linji lineage from the tenth century onwards, both of which were formed by Baizhang's later generations of disciples, were important factors in Baizhang's subsequent rise to great fame. It is tempting to speculate that the emergence of the legend about his codification of Chan monastic life was part of this later sharpening and enhancing of his image as the undisputed leader of the Hongzhou School following Mazu's passing away. By the early Song, the legend became widely accepted as an integral part of Chan lore, assuring Baizhang's place among the greatest ancestors of the Chan tradition.[34] Nonetheless, as far

[34] This is perhaps not a fully satisfactory explanation of the origins of Baizhang's legend, since there were other noted monks from the same and the subsequent generation who could equally well fit into the role of a patron saint of Chan monasticism. Could it be that Baizhang was in some way concerned with the organization of monastic life and managed to transmit this concern to his disciples? Or could it be that, as Ishii has suggested, some sort of rules were gradually developed at Baizhang mountain, and that this rules were retroactively attributed to Baizhang, who first established the community there? It is also possible that the author(s) of *Chanmen guishi* were involved in the creation of the legend, and that for some unknown reason they choose Baizhang as the originator of the rules

as the history of the Hongzhou School is concerned, we can conclude that there is no reason to assume that Baizhang, or any of other disciple of Mazu, created a set of monastic rules that implied rejection of the Vinaya and signaled the institutional independence of the Chan School.

## Chan and Buddhist Monasticism

Japanese scholars' focus on the legend about Baizhang's creation of a system of Chan monastic rules is part of their broad efforts to delineate the unique features of Chan as an independent tradition that situated itself outside of the established contours of Tang Buddhism. Having assumed that during the Tang dynasty the Chan School categorically rejected the traditional teachings and practices of Chinese Buddhism and established its own novel soteriological paradigms, they also presumed that Chan monks' rejection of tradition did not stop there. Virtually all scholars have also taken almost for granted the notion that Chan's revolutionary transformation of Chinese Buddhism must have been extended to include rejection of existing monastic institutions and creation of new models of religious life.

The inquiries into the provenance of the fabled text that contained the rules composed by Baizhang are based on a set of uncritical assumptions about Tang Chan, which are far from being proven as actual historical events. First, there is the preconceived notion that from the mid-Tang onwards—or perhaps even earlier, according to some interpretations—the Chan School established its "independence" as a separate sectl. It was the widely-accepted belief in Chan School's institutional independence—the

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recorded by him/them. Unfortunately, due to lack or reliable sources, this issues cannot be resolved in an entirely satisfactory manner.

nature of which is never precisely defined in a satisfactory manner—that led earlier scholars to direct their speculative energies towards establishing the origins and contents of Baizhang's elusive monastic code, and ascertaining its place and role in the formation of some unique form of Chan monasticism. Because of the influence of these beliefs, while much ink has been used to document the origins of the fictional "Baizhang Rules of Purity," other Tang sources that actually contain information about ninth century monastic life but repudiate the prevalent view about Chan School's institutional independence, especially *Guishan jingce*, have been completely ignored.

The historical importance of the introduction of Chan monastic rules is often presented in glowing terms as a watershed point in the history of East Asian Buddhist monasticism. The assumed significance of this occurrence, which presumably drastically changed the course of Chinese Buddhism, and Baizhang's seminal role in it, is expressed in Kagamishima's statement translated below. Basing himself on views that were already formulated by Ui during the first half of this century, Kagamishima succinctly and clearly expresses something akin to an unofficial orthodoxy in Japanese Buddhist scholarship:

> The establishment of *Baizhang qinggui* had epochal significance in the history of [Buddhist] monastic precepts. While in terms of its intellectual orientation Chinese Buddhism followed the teachings of Mahayana, in actual practice [Chinese monks] followed the Hīnayāna precepts. Even though in itself that harbored various contradictions, there was nobody to rectify the situation. The one who broke through the unbreakable wall of the tradition of monastic precepts, who enacted reformation, and who established the [Chan] rules of purity, which were monastic precepts peculiar to Chinese Buddhism, was Baizhang himself![35]

Such observations are in perfect accord with the biased views, characteristic of Japanese Buddhism, against the supposedly spiritually inferior "Hīnayāna precepts," which had to

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[35] Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," p. 122–23.

be discarded because they were fundamentally incompatible with the Mahayana spirit of East Asian Buddhism. The basic notions underlining the view expresed in the above quotation are (1) that the Chan School *must* have established its own unique system of monastic rules, which in addition to regulating monks' daily life also served as a symbol of its institutional independence, and (2) that this development was a natural result of Chan's creation of a novel religious philosophy and spiritual practice. These presumptions have led some scholars to speculate that a distinct form of Chan monasticism was formed even before the time of Baizhang.[36] Even though there is no evidence to suggest that the Chan School developed any form of distinct monastic structures and practices during the early Tang, it has been suggested that the so-called East Mountain tradition (Dongshan famen 東山法門) of early Chan developed a unique pattern of monastic life that set it apart from the rest of contemporaneous Chinese Buddhism. According to Ui, the earliest proponent of this theory, a distinct form of Chan monastic life must already have existed at the monasteries of Daoxin 道信 (580–651) and Hongren 弘忍 (601–674), the leaders of the East Mountain tradition who later came to be recognized as the fourth and fifth Chan patriarchs, respectively.[37] Other scholars have

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[36] As Foulk says, "Historians are generally divided on the issue of *when*, not *if*, sectarian Chan monastic institutions came into existence in the Tang." Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School'," p. 9.

[37] See Ui, *Zenshūshi kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 81–90. Ui's characterization of these two communities as the cradle of Chan monasticism is to a large extent based on his assumption that they were economically self-sufficient, rather that reliant on lay patronage for their operation. His assertions about the novel structuring of monastic life in these monasteries are not based on any concrete evidence about the organizational structures and communal practices instituted at Daoxin and Hongren's monasteries. Rather, they are projections of later idealized conceptions of Chan monasticism onto these two communities. The basic premise seems to be that if Daoxin and Hongren had large monastic communities, as their biographers alleged, they must have needed some sort of rules to organize the life of the monks who studied under them. Ui apparently assumed that Daoxin and Hongren had to create their own form of communal life, which became the basis for the earliest form of Chan

argued that some of the rules codified by Baizhang must already have been formulated and put into practice at Mazu's Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺, even though it is quite obvious that the institutional setting there would have created serious obstacles for Mazu even if he wanted to introduce such changes (not to mention that he probably did not have any interest in doing so).[38]

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monastic life, rather than rely on already-existing models of monastic organization. Ui's argument, which is still widely accepted, is not convincing. It is curious that he seems to have assumed that these two communities had to establish some sort of distinct monastic lifestyle—at a time when still there was probably no astute awareness of Chan as a distinct school of Buddhism—as if there were no other established patterns of monastic organization that governing large monasteries during the seventh century that were available as adequate models to the leaders of the incipient Chan tradition. Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*, p. 137, basically concurs with Ui, whose argument is also excepted by Ōishi Shuyū 大石守雄 in his "Ko shingi ni tsuite" 古清規について, ZK 44 (1953), pp. 81–88. Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," p. 233, also accepts the view that Daoxin's community was economically self-supporting. For a more detailed summary of Ui's argument, as well as an outline of Shina's criticism of it, see Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 308–13.

[38] See Okimoto, "Zen shisō keiseishi no kenkyū" 禪思想形成史の研究, p. 201. Okimoto's reasoning is somewhat similar to Ui's, in as much as he speculated that the presence of certain monastic practices—which he considers to be defining features of Chan monasticism—at Mazu's monastery is proof that he did institute a form of monastic life similar to the one codified by Baizhang. In Ui's case, those defining features were economic self-sufficiency achieved through productive work on part of the monks, while Okimoto, following Yanagida, takes the supposed institution of public sermons (*shangtang* 上堂) and manual labor (*puqing* 普請) at Mazu's monastery to be clear indications that the rules codified by Baizhang were already instituted by Mazu. That is a farfetched conclusion premised on questionable evidence, which mostly consists of apocryphal stories that appear in Song collections. As we saw in Chapter Three, there is no evidence that Mazu instituted any novel forms of monastic life. Okimoto also seems to be unaware that Kaiyuan monastery was an urban monastery, where there were probably no opportunities for farming. Moreover, as the monastery received official sponsorship, there was no need for its monks to engage in activities of that kind. Aware of that, Suzuki has suggested that although Hongzhou schools "reformation" program was started by Mazu at Kaiyuan monastery, due to the monastery's setting and its official status, it was not possible at that time to also enact sweeping reformation of monastic life. Thus, the task of creating a new monastic system fell on Baizhang, who at the remote mountain site where his new monastery was located presumably had greater opportunity to introduce far-reaching changes in the way "Chan monasteries" were organized. Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 143.

All the arguments about the institutional independence of the Chan School during the Tang rest upon the assumption that the existence of specific forms of monastic practice that are deemed as defining the Chan tradition in monasteries led by Chan monks proves that those monasteries belonged to an organized system of Chan monasticism that enjoyed institutional independence. Some of the monastic attitudes and practices that are most often evoked as being characteristic of independent Chan monasticism are: (1) Chan monks' rejection of the Vinaya; (2) their realization of economic self-sufficiency through their own communal participation in physical work; and (3) their building of new monasteries with features that were unique to the Chan School. The text that is usually quoted as the earliest evidence for the existence of all of these features, which are regarded as central to the proper definition of distinctive Chan monasticism, is the already-mentioned *Chanmen guishi*, whose unknown author(s) claimed to record the monastic innovations introduced by Baizhang. Japanese scholars have gone to an extraordinary effort to ascertain that these specific features of monastic life were indeed instituted during the time of Baizhang (or perhaps even earlier in some cases). The same scholars have also tried to make the case that these forms of monastic life were integral parts of a unique system of Chan monasticism whose singular format embodied Chan's religious values, and which was independent from the rest of contemporaneous Chinese monastic institutions. Let me separately examine each of these supposedly defining characteristic of independent Chan monasticism.

***Rejection of the Vinaya.*** There is no evidence that as a group Chan monks ever outrightly rejected the Vinaya during the Tang dynasty (or for that matter during any period of Chinese history). As their individual biographies make clear, virtually all noted Hongzhou monks were ordained according to the Vinaya, as was customary during the

Tang. Many of them did undertake study of the monastic precepts during their formative years of religious training, along with their study of Buddhist doctrines.[39] During the Tang period, acknowledgment of the authority of the Vinaya as a system for regulating monastic life was reinforced by both religious tradition and government encouragement. Though many (perhaps most) Chinese monks engaged in various activities that were proscribed by specific Vinaya rules, the Vinaya was still considered a set of guiding standards for regulating the daily lives of the monks and defining their place in society.

In addition to the Vinaya, Chinese monks were also subjected to additional regulations enacted by the Tang government, which was always anxious to assert its control over the Buddhist order. Soon after the establishment of the dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 627–650), the government introduced *Dao seng ge* 道僧格, a code that regulated Buddhist and Daoist clergy. This code was probably adopted in 637, as a part of the legal code known as *Zhenguan lü* 貞觀律. The *Dao seng ge* code, which is no longer extant, imposed strict regulations on the Buddhist and Daoist clergy, and imposed harsh penalties for various kinds of improper behavior.[40]

The promulgation of the code was part of the Tang state's efforts to control the clergy and restrict its participation in secular life. As part of its regulation of organized religion, the Tang state also assumed control over monastic ordinations and required all monks to be registered. It is true that at the periphery of Chinese society the ability of the central government to control various religious activities was seriously weakened, as can be seen from the prevalence of illegal ordinations and the ineffectiveness of many of the

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[39] See the discussion of the lives of Mazu's disciples presented in Chapters Five and Six.

[40] See Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 95–97, and Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 17–21.

government's measures designed to curb monastic growth and restrict the activities of monks. Nonetheless, medieval China was hardly a society where religious freedom existed in the modern sense of the world. Rejection and criticism of the orthodox monastic tradition could elicit a strong and resolute response from the state, as can be seen from the history of the Three Stages sect (Sanjie jiao 三階教). Because of its vocal rejection of the monastic order, the conventional forms of religious practice, and the orthodox teachings of Buddhism, this sect was persecuted during the reigns of Empress Wu and Xuanzong, leading to the sect's eventual demise.[41]

Official recognition and support of monks and monasteries came together with the requirements that they adopt certain regulatory restrains and formally acquiesce to conservative values and traditions. The other option was a precarious existence at the edge of Chinese society, with the constant danger of being the first to be swept away when the state initiated the next of its periodic "purification campaigns" directed at the monastic order, which usually involved weeding out of "illegal" clergy. There were good external reasons why a new tradition, especially an elitist tradition such as Chan that tried to appeal to the upper class, would avoid clashing with the established system and risk running afoul of the authorities.

If we try to situate the monks who were associated with the Hongzhou School in terms of their place within the monastic community of their time, we can surmise that most of them were "official monks," that is to say monks who were ordained by the Vinaya and whose official status as members of the clergy was sanctioned by the state. Mazu himself taught at Kaiyuan monastery, which was a part of a network of official

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[41] Mark Edward Lewis, "The Suppression of the Three Stages Sect: Apocrypha as a Political Issue," in Robert Buswell, ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, pp. 226–32.

state-supported monasteries, and the monks who came to study with him there were presumably also properly ordained. Similarly, many of his disciples resided in official monasteries. Disciples who taught in the two capitals—Weikuan, Huaihui, Dayi, and Ruman—all resided in prominent official monasteries.[42] Moreover, powerful government officials supported many of Mazu's disciples. Though the indication of this pattern of economic sponsorship does not necessarily provide conclusive evidence about their official status, it does indicate that they were establish members of the local monastic elite in the areas where they resided. Of course, Mazu had many disciples, and we do not have detailed information about the background of all of them. Nevertheless, even if some of Mazu's disciples lacked an official status, i.e. they were "private" or "common" monks who were not properly ordained, obviously that was not the case with the majority of his disciples.[43]

If we accept the above argument that as a whole the Hongzhou School was part of the official monastic order, what should we make of the ambiguous claim made by the author of *Chanmen guishi* that Baizhang "established a separate Chan monastery?" According to this text, early Chan monks resided in Vinaya monasteries (*lüsi* 律寺), and this supposedly awkward arrangement led Baizhang to conceive the idea of establishing a separate Chan monastery.[44] As has been pointed out by Foulk, here the term "Vinaya

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[42] See Chapter Six.

[43] See the distinction between official, private, and common monks introduced in Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, p. 4. Note, however, that Gernet's division of medieval Chinese Buddhism into two types, official and private (see Ibid., p. 5), is somewhat too rigid, since there was probably more flexibility in the system and greater fluidity in the interactions between the various types of monks.

[44] CDL 6.117; and Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" pp. 347–48. See also the quotation from SGSZ at the beginning of this chapter.

monastery" can best be interpreted to mean an official monastery that was regulated according to the Vinaya.[45] That would of course include monasteries that had ordination platforms and emphasized training in the monastic precepts, but it would also include all other official monasteries—both great and small, located in the capitals as well as in the provinces—which did not have those facilities.

Mazu's and Wuye's monasteries, both of which belonged to the Kaiyuan system of official monasteries, fit this description, as do Anguo monastery 安國寺 in Changan, where Weikuan resided, as well as the other monasteries in the capitals where Mazu's other disciples resided. In addition, the monasteries of Baizhang's two main disciples, Guishan Lingyou and Huangbo Xiyun, also seem to have enjoyed official status. When Guishan's monastery was destroyed during the Huichang era (841–846) persecution of Buddhism, its renovation in 846, following the end of the persecution, was organized and sponsored by Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860).[46] Pei, the civil governor of Hunan at the time, was also Huangbo's supporter. It is most likely that at that occasion the reconstruction of the monastery was undertaken with state funds, as part of the state-wide restoration of monasteries damaged during the persecution ordered by the new emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859).[47] It is quite evident that during and after Baizhang's lifetime, the majority of Chan monks did not reside in monasteries that were outside of the official system. It is still conceivable that some Chan monks did reside in unofficial monasteries, but even if

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[45] Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" pp. 366–69. Foulk's interpretation is based on Shiina's "Shotō zensha no ritsuin kyōjū ni tsuite," IBK 17/2 (1969), pp. 770–72. Shiina correctly points out that most monks of the Northern School of Chan did reside in such monasteries, but his argument that the Southern School opposed this trend is not that convincing (see Ibid., pp. 770–71).

[46] *Tanzhou daguishan tongqingsi dayuan chanshi beiming bingxu* 潭州大潙山同慶寺大圓禪師碑銘并序, QTW 820.3832c.

that were the case, probably it mostly involved some of the monks who established new monasteries in more remote areas.

I think that the above passage from *Chanmen guishi* about Baizhang's supposed rejection of mainstream monasteries and establishment of separate Chan monasteries can best be read in context of the sectarian efforts of the early Song Chan School to carve a distinct identity of its own, rather than as a historical record pertinent to Tang monastic life. But even if we accept the statement as being at least partially true, the passage still only means that Chan monks established monasteries that were in some way distinct from the mainstream monasteries of their time. That does not necessarily mean that they rejected outright the whole monastic tradition, including the Vinaya. Even during the Song, when the Chan School had stronger sectarian identity, Chan monks continued to be ordained according to the Vinaya.[48] *Chanmen guishi* states that Baizhang established a "separate" Chan monastery, which does imply that such a monastery was in some way distinct from other monasteries. At the same time, "separate" in this case does not connote a status of complete institutional independence. The case we have here is somewhat similar to the status of Guoqing monastery 國清寺 on Tiantai mountain 天台山. Although from the Sui 隋 dynasty (581–618) onwards this monastery was a monastic center strongly associated with the Tiantai School, at the same time it was also a mainstream officially recognized monastery.

It seems best to interpret the *Chanmen guishi* passage to mean that, just as in the case of Guoqing monastery and the Tiantai School, from the late Tang onwards at least

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[47] See Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, p. 138.

[48] See the sections on ordination and on keeping the precepts in *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, XZJ 111.437a-b; and Kagamishima, trans., *Zenen shingi*, pp. 13–19.

some Chan monks lived in monasteries that had their own "separate" (i.e. distinct) identity, even though that did not set them outside of the larger monastic tradition.[49] The Tang monastic tradition was very large and broad, and was characterized by considerable institutional flexibility that allowed it to integrate various institutional arrangements and religious practices without losing its basis identity. Because of that, various schools of Chinese Buddhism, such as Tiantai and Chan, were able to develop their distinctive religious identities, while at the same time being readily absorbed within the larger monastic tradition. This interpretation is not only more in keeping with earlier Chan sources from the Tang, but also accords with the contents of *Chanmen guishi* itself. Though the text's author claims to describe a "separate" Chan monastery, for the most part he presents a general description of a large public monastery from the tenth century, rather than some uniquely Chan institution.[50]

Though generally speaking Chan monks during both the Tang and the Song dynasties, like all other conventional Chinese monks of the same period, did accept the authority of the Vinaya, strict observance of all the minute rules stipulated by the Vinaya was another manner. Inasmuch Chan monks did in some of their practices deviate with

[49] A clear rejection of the Vinaya can of course be found among the medieval Japanese Zen monks who, following the system of Mahayana monastic ordinations instituted by the Tendai School soon after the death of Saichō 最澄 (767–822), rejected the authority of the "Hīnayāna" Vinaya. Nothing of that kind ever happened in China, and Japanese scholars' interpretation of *Chanmen* as an evidence of the establishment of independent Chan monasteries is reading into the text more than it really says, probably in part under the influence of the history of their native Zen traditions on their interpretation of the history of Chinese Chan Buddhism. For Saichō and the establishment of a new system of Tendai ordinations, see Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School*. For the manifold problems and abuses that followed Tendai School's rejection of the Vinaya, see Groner, "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai: A Study of Annen's *Futsū jubosatsukai kōshaku*," in Robert Buswell, ed., *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, pp. 251–90.

[50] This point is discussed inmore detail later in this chapter.

specific Vinaya rules, it is possible to say, as Zanning stated, that they "did not follow the Vinaya regulations."[51] But even in that respect Chan monks were not that different from most of their contemporaries. Though medieval Chinese monks formally accepted the religious authority of the Vinaya, there is ample evidence to suggest that most monks did not closely adhere to all the rules of the Vinaya.

Unlike more conservative monastic traditions, such as the Theravada School in Sri Lanka, which conceived of the Vinaya as the final authority in all matters pertaining to monastic life, Chinese monks did inherit some of the ambiguous attitudes about the Vinaya that developed within the Indian Mahayana tradition. These ambiguities were further amplified by the clash between Indian monastic practices and Chinese social norms. As a result, the Vinaya was only one of the elements that shaped the organizational structure of Chinese monasteries and the ethical conduct of the Buddhist clergy. In addition to the Vinaya, Chinese monastic life was also regulated by the Bodhisattva precepts, the government regulations mentioned above, the sets of rules written for specific monasteries (discussed in the following section), as well as by the countless other unwritten monastic customs and rituals that evolved during the long history of Buddhism in China.

Thus, to say that "Chan monasteries" were not solely regulated by the Vinaya does not say much, because that simply means they were like most other Chinese monasteries. At the same time, though in Chinese Buddhism the Vinaya did not enjoy the same status accorded to it by the Theravada tradition, it still continued to perform important roles in Chinese monasticism. Those roles included delineating a set of standards that defined the

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[51] See the quotation from SGSZ at the beginning of this chapter.

image of exemplary Buddhist monks, and serving as a controlling mechanism that restrained the various pressures, exerted both from within and from without the monastic order, to completely Sinicize monastic life and practice. There is no reason to assume that in their attitudes towards the Vinaya Chan monks were very different from many of their contemporaries. If anything, their emphasis on a disciplined monastic lifestyle and their structured communal form of contemplative religious practice placed them among the more conservative members of the Buddhist clergy in regards to their attitudes towards the Vinaya.

***Communal work and economic self-sufficiency***. Perhaps the most-often mentioned feature of independent Chan monasticism, which is closely related to Chan's supposed rejection of the Vinaya, is the institution of physical work as an essential aspect of Chan monastic life. According to Kagamishima, whose views on this matter are representative of Japanese Chan/Zen scholarship, beginning with Baizhang, the Chan School rejected the search for financial patronage and the extensive economic activities in which other monasteries were engaged. Instead, Baizhang instituted a self-supporting system in which the monastic community through its own physical work produced by itself the resources it needed to satisfy its everyday needs.[52] The spirit of this system is expressed by the famous adage "A day without work is a day without food," said to have been uttered by the elderly Baizhang when his concerned disciples hid his tools in order to prevent him from working in the fields.[53]

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[52] Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," p. 126.

[53] *Baizhang yulu* 百丈語錄, XZJ 119.410d.

Baizhang's institution of physical labor, we are told, was made necessary in part by his decision to reject the economic support of the nobility and the government officials, which was an important source of income for the Buddhist establishments of his time. Instead of selling himself to the nobles for the sake of their economic support, Baizhang supposedly decided to institute a new system of monastic economy in which his community would meet its material needs by engaging in productive work, a communal undertaking in which all residents, from the youngest postulant to the abbot, participated. In this way, Chan monastic communities were apparently able to safeguard their spiritual independence by establishing their economic independence.[54] The work performed by Chan monks, according to Kagamishima, in addition to the chores needed for the daily upkeep of the monastery (such as cleaning, drawing water, cooking, etc.), also involved agricultural work. As the Vinaya prohibited agricultural activities, the "fact" that Chan monks engaged in them for Kagamishima indicates not only that they developed a new model of economically self-sufficient system of monastic life, but also symbolized their rejection of the Vinaya.

Kondō, who following Ui assumes that Chan communal life and the practice of physical work started at Daoxin's monastery, also asserts that the institution of the ideal of economic self-sufficiency was one of the defining factors that led to the creation of

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[54] Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," p. 127a. Kagamishima also adds that the self-supporting lifestyle of the Chan communities was very much like that of the common people. For him the fact that the Chan School, which apparently shared its destiny with the downtrodden masses (?!), eventually prospered while the other schools that were connected with the aristocracy perished serves as a valuable historical lesson. Ibid., p. 130a. He of course forgets that Chan School's subsequent prosperity—especially during its heydays under the Song dynasty, but also during the Tang—was closely related to its ability to appeal to the literati and officials, and to obtain their financial and political support.

Chan monastic rules.[55] According to him, during Baizhang's lifetime productive physical work was further democratized, so that eventually all monks took part in it in a spirit of true comradeship.[56] This romanticized version of Chan monasticism, which paints a pastoral image of a community of down-to-earth contemplatives who support their natural lifestyle through the labor of their own hands, perhaps makes for an interesting reading, but there is little evidence that it has much to do with the actual lives of medieval Chan monks. Mazu and many of his disciples received ample economic support from powerful and well placed lay supporters. Although there is no evidence to prove it, they were also probably supported by the wider local communities in the areas where their monasteries were located. We can assume with reasonable certainty that they did not extensively engage in physical work, and that their communities were neither self-supporting, nor did they aspire to become so.[57] Moreover, according to the rules for Xuefeng's monastery

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[55] Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," p. 232. Kondō thinks that, in addition to Chan monks' instituting of communal life and physical work, changes in the perception of sitting meditation and the construction of new temples were two additional factors that led to the creation of Chan monastic rules.

[56] Ibid., p. 235. The theme of Chan's democratization of monastic life was already taken up by D. T. Suzuki, who, no doubt trying to make Zen more attractive to his Western audiences, wrote that the introduction of physical work in Chan monasteries was an example "democratic spirit in action," an egalitarian spirit that eschewed any sort of discrimination based on social status. Suzuki, *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*, p. 33; also quoted in Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 315. Concerning the presence of democratic values in medieval Chinese society, it is somewhat farfetched to argue that notions of that kind existed over a millennium ago. Imputing these kind of ideas and values to medieval monks, without properly considering the structure of the society in which they lived, is highly questionable, regardless of how appealing these notions might be to modern readers.

[57] It is true that there are many stories about Mazu and his disciples that depict them in the context of what appears to be periods of communal work. For examples of passages in later Chan texts that seem to indicate that manual work was practiced in Tang monasteries, see Kondō Ryōichi, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono genkei", p. 43, n. 13. Yet, the earliest stories of this kind are from the mid-tenth century, and most of them are even later. One example of a story that in a later edition is changed in a way that suggests that Mazu's community performed some kind of farming is the story of Shuilao's

(that will be presented in the next section), at least some monasteries headed by Chan teachers had extensive land holdings. In such monasteries, monastic officials merely supervised the cultivation and other use of these lands, rather than monks actually working in the fields. This description is very much in accord with what we know about the organization of Tang monastic economies, and indicates that the monasteries of Chan monks were not exceptional in this particular respect.

Productive work might have been performed by some of the monks who resided in remote areas and were unable or unwilling to secure the support of local patrons. One example of this kind is Nanquan. According to his biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*, in 796 he arrived at Nanquan mountain (in Anhui 安徽), where he built himself a hermitage. During his long stay in the mountain—the biography says he did not leave the mountain for three decades—he is said to have supported himself with work in the mountain, which included raising cattle and farming.[58] However, as during this period Nanquan was living as a hermit, his experience cannot be taken as evidence that physical work was part of communal monastic life among monks associated with the Hongzhou School. Perhaps a more pertinent example of physical work, this time at Mazu's first community at Fojiyan 佛跡巖 (in Fujian 福建), is recorded in Ganquan Zhixian's 付泉志賢 biography in *Song gaoseng zhuan*. There it is recorded that after the young Zhixian, who was a native of the province where the monastery was located, joined Mazu's

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awakening under Mazu. While in the MY version of the story there is not mention of any kind of physical work, in the later *Gu zunsu yulu* version, Mazu is depicted as gathering rattan with his community of monks. See XZJ 119.408a, XZJ 118.80d, and Cheng-chien, *Sun-face Buddha*, pp. 77, 92, n.58.

[58] SGSZ 11, T 50.775a.

community, he worked hard drawing water and collecting firewood.[59] It is not clear whether at that time Zhixian was still a novice, but if that were the case (as seems likely), his experience was a very common one, since in most Chinese monasteries novices did often perform chores of this kind.

In the collections of Chan literature composed during the early Song period, there are many short stories that depict Hongzhou monks as engaging in various forms of physical work.[60] The passing references to monks performing physical work that appear in these mostly apocryphal stories were probably added to the original dialogues, which are the main part of the stories, by the later editors. In the process of recording originally oral narratives in a literary format, these editors probably wanted to provide some sort of situational contexts to make the dialogues appear more realistic. The situations they recreated reflected the Song tradition's stylized imaging of Tang Chan, and were not based on first-hand knowledge about the daily lives of Chan monks. But even if we grant the possibility that these stories reflect at least some of the ambiance of Tang monastic life, that still only indicates that at certain occasions Chan monks did engage in physical work as part of their participation in the upkeep of their monasteries, much in the same manner as the monks in many other (probably most) monasteries. Even if that were the case (which is more probable in the case of the smaller non-urban monasteries), that still in no way indicates that Chan monks strove to be economically self-sufficient, much less that communal work and economic self-sufficiency were important features of a unique system of Chan monasticism.

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[59] SGSZ 9, T 50.763.

[60] For examples of monks engaging in physical work from the record of Mazu, see MY, XZJ 119.407c, 407d, and Cheng-chien, *Sun-face Buddha*, pp. 72, 75.

If some of the monastic communities in which Chan monks resided did engage in communal work, they were hardly unique in the world of Tang Buddhism. There are quite a few records of medieval monks engaged in various kinds of communal work, including agricultural activities.[61] For example, physical work was part of the monastic regiment of Zhiyi's community at Tiantai mountain during the Sui period. During the Six Dynasties 六代 (c. 222–589) period, it was already customary to assign physical work to laymen and novices, but in Zhiyi's community fully-ordained monks also took part in it.[62] Moreover, the notion that work can be performed as a form of spiritual practice—supposedly a unique Chan idea—is fully compatible with some of Zhiyi's teachings about meditative practice. That is particularly true of his explication of the practice of "neither walking nor sitting samādhi" (*feixing feizuo sanmei* 非行非坐三昧), especially in its unstructured mode of *suiziyi* 隨自意 (following one's own thoughts), in which the practitioner engages in mental contemplation amidst any kind of activity in which he might be involved.[63] Another example of monks engaging in physical work that is closer to Baizhang's time can be found in the diary of the Japanese pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 (799–852), which records communal work that Ennin saw in a monastery in Shandong 山東 in 839.[64] As these examples indicate, even if some (or even all) Chan monks did engage in

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[61] See Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, pp. 148, and Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, p. 96.

[62] Ikeda Rosan 池田魯參, "Tendai Chigi no risseihō" 天台智顗の立制法, pp. 98–100.

[63] Ibid., p. 99. For a description of the practice of this samādhi, see Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed. *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, pp. 72–84.

[64] Edwin O. Reischauer, trans. *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*, p. 150. See also the biography of Xinxing 信行 (540–594), the founder of the Three Stages sect,

productive physical work, including agricultural work, they were not unique in that respect. Thus, the institution of communal work cannot be considered a feature unique to "Chan monasticism."[65]

Not only is there no reliable information about wide-scale introduction of communal work in Chan monasteries during the Tang period, but even those Chan texts from the Song period which do acknowledge the presence of physical work in Chan monasteries do not place much emphasis on it as a major characteristic of Chan religious life. It is only in the hands of Japanese scholars, under the influence of Japanese Zen schools' ideology, that communal work emerges as one of the defining features of Chan/Zen monastic life.[66] To sum up, there is little evidence to show that Chan monks

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which states that he rejected the monastic precepts and engaged in physical work, in. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 16, T 50.560a.

[65] When faced with the evidence that monks' participation in physical work was not restricted to the Chan School, the responses of Japanese scholars have been somewhat peculiar. While acknowledging that physical work was performed at other Buddhist monasteries during the Tang, Kagamishima claims that Chan monks' model of communal work was unique because their work was "productive work." That is to say, Chan monasteries engaged in agriculture and other productive activities, through which the Chan School was able to establish a self-supporting model of monastic life, while the physical work performed at other monasteries was more restricted in function and scope. Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," pp. 124. See also Foulk's criticism of Yanagida's and Kagashima's views about the unique nature of Chan monk's physical works, which he appropriately suggests are "little more that later day Zen apologetics." Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" pp. 321–22.

[66] It is interesting to note that Japanese scholars follow the idealized images of Zen monastic life embedded in the ideological constructs of the Japanese Zen sects, but without really reflecting how far those images are removed from the actual realities of Zen practice in Japan. Contemporary Japanese Zen temples virtually exclusively support themselves by exploiting their market share of the lucrative funeral business (which is predetermined by a tradition that goes back to the Tokugawa 德川 period [1603–1867]), with some of them also taking part in the tourist industry. During the medieval period, Zen large monasteries, especially those belonging to the Five Mountains system, were recipients of large donations from the nobles and warriors, as well as holders of large land estates (see Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, pp. 253–89). Though I have not engaged in any study on the subject, I would venture to guess that, like most of their Chinese counterparts, Zen monasteries and temples in Japan rarely (if

during the Tang widely engaged in physical work, and there is even less to suggest that they strove to be economically self-sufficient. Even if some of them did perform physical work, they were hardly unique in that respect, and the institution of communal work in some monasteries cannot be used as an indication that the Chan School became institutional independent in any meaningful way.

***Construction of "Chan monasteries."*** Like the two developments cited as confirmation of Chan School's institutional independence that I just examined, the earliest evidence for the building of new monasteries with features that were unique to the Chan School consist of little more than a short and ambiguous passage in *Chanmen guishi*. In his brief idealized description of a Chan monastery, the author of the text provides the following information about its architectural features: "The Buddha hall was not constructed, but only the dharma hall was erected. This symbolized that the abbot of the present generation, who had received transmission [of the dharma] from the Buddha and the patriarchs, is to be honored."[67] Many scholars have rashly accepted this passage as convincing evidence that Chan monks, in keeping with their iconoclastic ideas about religious life, established monasteries that in their layout were different from other Buddhist monasteries.

The main difference in physical layout of these monasteries was the establishment of the Dharma Hall as a central building, following the Chan monks' rejection of the

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ever) made any effort to achieve economic independence through monks' physical work. The short periods of communal work, which still form a part of the training programs for Zen priests in the handful of "training monasteries," were probably integrated into the daily routine of the Zen hall more because of their ritual function, as expression of some sort of pure spirit of authentic Zen practice, rather than because they served any significant purpose in monasteries' economic life.

Buddha Hall, a standard building that was found in most Buddhist monasteries.[68] On the basis of *Chanmen guishi*'s account of Chan's rejection of the Dharma Hall, Yanagida has also argued that Baizhang instituted a novel form for "ascending the hall" (*shangtang* 上堂) during public lectures, which motivated the establishment of the Dharma Hall as central part of a "Chan monastery."[69] As in the case of the other supposedly unique features of Chan monasticism examined above, the problem with these assertions is that they place disproportionate faith in the truthfulness of *Chanmen guishi*'s description, which basically consists of two ambiguous sentences. On the basis of this limited information, they construct theories about the distinct layout of Chan monasteries during the Tang that are not supported with any additional evidence from the Tang period.

There are examples of Chan monks who during the ninth century established new monasteries. Among Mazu's disciples, monks who established new monasteries included Nanquan, Baizhang, Dayi, Ruman, and Yanguan.[70] Unfortunately, we do not have

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[67] CDL 6.117. Cf. Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 348, and Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule," p. 175.

[68] According to Collcutt's somewhat suppositional interpretation of this section of *Chanmen*, the rejection of the Buddha Hall was due to the fear that performance of ceremonies in it would lead the monks away from spiritual self-reliance and detract them from their meditation, as well as cause secularization of monastic life since the building would provide the setting for performance of ceremonial services for lay donors. Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule," pp. 175–76.

[69] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," pp. 515–16. Yanagida bases his discussion of the changes in the format of Chan sermons introduced by Baizhang on passages extrapolated from various sources such as the *Platform Sūtra*. He then compares such "evidence" with the characteristic features of Chan monasteries described in *Chanmen guishi*, which he takes to be a reliable source for documenting Baizhang's innovations in the physical arrangement and religious function of Chan monasteries.

[70] See listing in Kondō, "Hyakujō shingi seiritsu no yōin," pp. 237–38. I think Kondō is incorrect when he states most Chan monks during the eight and early ninth centuries established monasteries by themselves. Though it is true that some of them did build new monasteries, most of them resided in previously established monasteries.

detailed information about the layout of these monasteries, but there is no indication that they were unusual in any major respect. Moreover, among Mazu's disciples there are even more examples of monks who, like Mazu himself, taught at monasteries that already had long histories by the time Chan monks first entered them. One such example is Guizong's monastery, which was originally established in 340 during the Eastern Jin dynasty to house an Indian monk and had no prior connection with the Chan School. The tendency to take over established monasteries becomes even stronger among the second generation of Mazu's disciples, many of who were locally prominent monks who enjoyed the support of powerful officials and resided in official monasteries. Even among the few monks listed above as founders of new monasteries, Dayi and Ruman came to be primarily associated with official monasteries in the two capitals, rather than the monasteries they established before they moved there.

Although there is little specific information about the monasteries built by Mazu's first and second-generation disciples, there is nothing to suggest that they rejected the Buddha Hall and only built Dharma Halls instead. The *Chanmen guishi* passage might be describing some kind of specific arrangement peculiar to few monasteries established by Chan monks, or it might be a description of the monastery of the text's author. But on the whole Mazu's disciples were active in a variety of social and institutional settings, and there is little to suggest that there was a specific uniformity in the physical layout of the monasteries in which they resided, or that they had any specific architectural features that were unique to them. There is also no indication that the inclusion and/or exclusion of specific buildings from monasteries' ground plan were considered to be typical of the Chan School.

Even if a few of the monasteries where Chan monks resided did dispense with the Buddha hall and had only a dharma hall, that peculiar architectural idiosyncrasy can hardly be taken as a persuasive indication of the emergence of a novel system of Chan monasticism. Monasteries that performed certain special functions did have specific buildings or structures that were not found in most other monasteries. Monasteries that were Vinaya centers could have an ordination platform, while contemplative monasteries (like those where Chan and Tiantai monks resided) were likely to have a meditation hall.[71] To once more use the monasteries of the Tiantai School as an example, some of them had special buildings that were used for the solitary performance of cultic practices that were peculiar to the Tiantai community, especially the four samādhis. Though these kinds of buildings were not found in most other monasteries, this specific feature of its monasteries' architectural plan did not imply that the Tiantai School was institutionally independent. The same analogy applies to the Chan School. Even if some Chan monks built monasteries that had peculiar architectural features such as a Dharma Hall located in the center of the monastic compound, that is still not an indication that they existed outside of the general monastic system.

To summarize the arguments made in this section, all the prevalent views about Chan monks' break up with the mainstream monastic traditions of the Tang period and their establishment of their school's institutional independence are based on unwarranted assumptions and tenuous evidence. All the individual features of monastic life and practice cited as evidence of Chan's institutional independence can also be traced to other monasteries that were not associated with the Chan School. Moreover, in themselves

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[71] *Chanmen guishi* refers to this building as a Sangha hall, and describes it as a place where the

those features do not constitute proof that Chan monks established sectarian monasteries that were wholly independent from the rest of the monastic order. Even if we postulate the emergence of distinct forms of monastic life that were peculiar to Chan, there is no evidence that the Chan School rejected the authority of the Vinaya and decided to chart its own institutional course outside of the rest of the Chinese monastic tradition.

It is significant to keep in mind that Mazu's first-generation disciples were active over very large geographical area, and that they taught in various kinds of monastic settings, from small hermitages in the mountains to large official monasteries in the capitals. The sheer diversity of these communities, which is even more evident among the second generation disciples, suggests there was only limited scope for quick and widespread uniform adoption of new forms of monastic life that could have led to distinct form of Chan monasticism, even though most disciples shared a common awareness of their membership in a loosely-structured religious fellowship in which Mazu was the central figure.

While earlier discussion of the establishment of Chan's institutional independence have centered on the minor developments described above (none of which can really serve as a criterion for defining such form of autonomy), no mention has been made of the major issues that define creation of sectarian traditions. To use examples from Japanese Buddhist history, the establishment of independent sects involved settling complex issues of religious authority and orthodoxy, including control over ordinations and setting up of ecclesiastical structures. Sect formation also involved organization of institutional control mechanisms and delineation of patterns of relationships between the

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meditation monks both resided and performed their religious practices. CDL 6.117.

networks of temples and other religious establishments that belonged to a particular sect, and to a smaller degree formulation of specific practices and rituals. When the Tendai School, initially under Saichō's leadership, first fought to secure its independence, it sought and (after some delay) eventually received court sanction for its new system of "monastic" ordinations based on the Bodhisattva precepts. The creation of such new system of ordinations, which implied an official recognition of a completely new set of attitudes towards the Vinaya, provided Tendai leaders with concrete measures of control over their community, and set in motion Tendai's institutional independence from the other traditions of Japanese Buddhism.[72] Furthermore, when the Sōtō sect was formed in medieval Japan, its forging of a distinct institutional identity was due to its leaders' success in binding together geographically distant temples into politically united sectarian factions. Such temple networks were hierarchically organized, with the Sōtō leadership being able to assert central authority that included control over abbot succession at individual temples.[73] None of these key features that defined the establishment of sectarian Buddhism in Japan—such as establishment of distinct ordinations and monastic orders, creation of centralized ecclesiastical authority, and setting up of networks of hierarchically organized temples—was ever characteristic of Chan in China.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong on the basis of the above discussion to suggest that Chan monks simply followed long-established traditions and did not contribute anything new to the evolution of Chinese monasticism. The Hongzhou School existed during a period of great changes in Chinese social institutions. Like all public institutions during the post-rebellion period, Buddhist monastic institutions were also undergoing a

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[72] See Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School*, pp. 107–165, 267–85.

process of change and adaptation to the changing political and social predicaments in which they functioned. Naturally, Chan monks were also involved in this process.

Here I do not try to suggest that the Chan School did not participate in the transformation of monastic institutions at all. The important point I try to make is that for the most part Chan monks were involved in those institutional changes from *within* the Buddhist monastic tradition, rather than as a protest group of outsiders that aimed to establish its own institutional independence.

The Hongzhou School emerged within a monastic tradition that had a millennium-long history, and Chan monks were well aware of the long-lasting traditions that were essential part of their religious upbringing. Chan monks were above all Buddhist monks, and their awareness of membership in Chan School's loosely structured religious fellowship was integrated as part of their main identity as members of the Buddhist monastic order. The evolution of Chinese monasticism, and Chan monks' participation in it, was evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and was, to use a Chan metaphor, a gradual process rather than a sudden one. Let me examine some of ways in which Chan monks participated in the gradual trasnformation of monastic institutions.

**Creation of Monastic Rules by Chan Monks**

Although the legend about Baizhang's creation of a novel system of Chan monastic rules had little to do with historical reality, there were sets of monastic rules created by Chan monks who were active during the ninth century. Interestingly enough, the first Chan monk who might have created some sort of monastic rules was Baizhang's confrere

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[73] See William Bodiford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan*, pp. 122–39.

Guizong Zhichang, a fellow disciple of Mazu who resided at Lushan 廬山.[74] In *Lushan Chengtian Guizongchansi zhongxiusi ji* 廬山承天歸宗禪寺重修寺記, an inscription composed at Guizong's monastery during the Northern Song period, there is the following passage:

> From the Six Dynasties and into the Sui-Tang period, [the abbots of the monastery?] all followed the Vinaya regulations (*lüyi* 律儀), [but] we cannot trace their genealogy. During the Zhengyuan 正元 era,[75] Li Bo 李勃(773–831), the prefect of Jiangzhou 江州, formed a high-minded friendship with Chan teacher Zhichang, whom he adopted as a spiritual advisor.[76] Here [Zhichang] became an abbot of the monastery, and changed (*ge* 革) [the existing monastic regulations?] for Chan rules (*changui* 禪規). Chan teacher [Zhi]chang was a successor of Mazu.[77]

This short passage seems to suggest that, after he took over as an abbot of Guizong monastery (whose name was subsequently changed to Guizong Chan monastery), Guizong instituted some kind of Chan rules that replaced the existing monastic regulations. Unfortunately, the text does not tell us anything about the contents of Guizong's rules. According to its colophon, the inscription was recorded at the end of 1063 (tenth month of the eight year of the Jiaoyou 嘉有 era during the Northern Song), on the occasion of the completion of Guizong Chan monastery's renovation.[78] As the text was composed long after Guizong's lifetime, it is possible that its author did not have much information available about Guizong's rules. It is also conceivable that there never

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[74] For more information about Guizong, see Chapter Five.

[75] That is probably a mistake for Yuanhe 元和 era (806–821).

[76] For his biographies, see JTS 171.4437–42, and XTS 118.4281–86. Li, whose name is also sometimes written as 渤, was also the author of Xitang's stele inscription.

[77] *Wuxi ji* 武溪集 7.4b, compiled by Yu Jing 余靖 (1000–1064), SKQS ed. Also quoted in Ishii, "Hyakujō kyōdan to Isan kyōdan (zoku)," pp. 294–95.

[78] *Wuxi ji* 7.6a.

were any specific Chan rules created by Guizong, and that the author simply wanted to record that with Guizong's coming the monastery was transformed into one of the local strongholds of the Chan School. Considering the inscription's late origin and the lack of any collaborating evidence, we might be tempted to dismiss its brief statement concerning Guizong's creation of Chan rules as no more than a piece of intriguing but unsubstantiated information.

However, the inscription's suggestion that Guizong created some kind of Chan rules appears more credible when we also consider that his disciple Furong Lingxun 芙蓉靈訓 (d.u.) wrote a set of monastic rules.[79] Lingxun's rules are no longer extant, but their existence is confirmed by Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908), who alludes to them in the rules he wrote for his own monastery.[80] Since Xuefeng clearly states that he based his rules on those created by Furong, to whom he refers to as "my late teacher," we can get some idea about Lingxun's monastic rules from Xuefeng's rules, which are preserved in his record of sayings. Thus, although the provenance of Guizong's rules, not to mention their content, is still shrouded with doubts, the fact that all three monks, who belong to three generations linked together by teacher-and-disciple relationships, are among the very few Chan monks from the ninth century about whose creation of monastic rules we have some information is quite striking. This suggests that there might have been a heritage of monastic regulations that started with Guizong and was transmitted to Xuefeng via Lingxu.

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[79] There is not much biographical information about Linxun, and there are virtually no records of his teachings. For brief biographical excerpts, see ZTJ 17.382, and CDL 10.187.

[80] *Xuefeng Zhenjue chanshi yulu* 雪峰真覺禪師語錄, XJZ 119.487b.

Xuefeng was one of the most influential Chan monks during the last few tumultuous decades of the Tang dynasty. His stature as a leading Chan teacher was further elevated during the Five Dynasties period when some of his disciples, especially Xuansha Shibei 玄沙師備 (835–908) and Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃 (864–949), emerged as leading monks of their time. Moreover, two of the so-called five schools, also referred to as "houses" (*jia* 家), of Chan recognized by the early Song tradition—the Fayan and Yunmen schools—were "established" by monks who belonged to Xuefeng's lineage.

Xuefeng was born in Nanan county 南安縣, Quanzhou 泉州 (in present-day Fujian province), in a devout Buddhist family.[81] He entered a Buddhist monastery in the neighboring county when he was only twelve, and became a novice at the age of seventeen. In 845, during the height of Emperor Wuzong's 武宗 (r. 840–846) severe persecution of Buddhism, he disguised himself and took shelter at Furong mountain, located further north in the neighboring Fuzhou 福州 (also in Fujian province), where he first met Lingxun.[82] By that time Lingxun had been at the mountain for over a decade, having established his monastery there in 833.[83] It was most likely during this time that Xuefeng became acquainted with the rules that Lingxun established for his own

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[81] The earliest biographical source about Xuefeng is his stele inscription, *Fuzhou Xuefengshan gu Zhenjue dashi beiming* 福州雪峰山故眞覺大師碑銘, compiled by Huang Tao 黃滔, QTW 826.3857c–58c. Another stupa inscriptions, entitled *Xuefeng heshang daming bingxu* 雪峰和尙塔銘并序, can be found in *Mingjue chanshi yulu* 明覺禪師語錄, T 47.673b-c. The authorship and provenance of the second inscription are unclear. Additional information about Xuefeng can be found in his biographies in CDL 16.302–05, and ZTJ 7.163–72. Both of them list his as a disciple of Deshan Xuanjian 德山宣鑑 (782–865), but they also record his study with Lingxun, as does his stele inscription.

[82] *Fuzhou Xuegengshan gu Zhenjue dashi beiming*, QTW 826.3858a.

[83] See Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, p. 464.

monastery. Xuefeng probably stayed with Lingxun at least until 850, the year he received his full ordination.[84] After a period of study with Deshan and a series of long pilgrimages, Xuefeng returned to Furong mountain in 865, and he eventual settled at Xuefeng mountain (which is close to Furong mountain), where in 875 local patrons built a monastery for him.[85] In the following years Xuefeng received extensive support from many of the important local officials, and during the final decade of his life the Wang 王 family—which from 893 virtually controlled the area that from 926 came to be know as the kingdom of Min—became his strong supporters.[86]

According to Zanning, Xuefeng instructed his disciples in silent meditation and was known for his emphasis on the strict observance of monastic precepts.[87] Xuefeng's views about the importance of monastic discipline are evident in the rules he created for his monastery, which were recorded in 901.[88] The rules were later carved in stone by Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975), the famous Chan exegete who was recognized as a sixth generation representative of Xuetou's lineage.[89] What follows is a translation of

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[84] Following ZTJ 7.163. Xuenfeng's *nianbu* 年譜, which is appended to *Xuefeng yulu*, gives 849 as the year of his ordination. See XZJ 119.488a. According to the stele inscription, Xuefeng returned once more to Furong mountain in 865. QTW 826.3858a.

[85] SGSZ 12, T 50.782b. For Xuefeng's monastery, see *Chunxi sanshan zhi* 淳熙三山志 34, in *Song-Yuan difangzhi congshu xubian* 宋元地方志叢書續編, vol. 2, p. 1241.

[86] ZTJ 7.171, and SGSZ 12, T 50.782b. For more details about Xuefeng's relationship with the rulers of Min, see Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 467–78.

[87] SGSZ 12, T 50.782c.

[88] Following the colophon that appears at the end of the rules. The colophon reads, "Proclaimed by monk Yicun on the tenth day of the sixth month, the fourth year of the Guanghua 光化 era." XZJ 119.487b. The year given in the text is mistaken, and it should probably read "first year of the Tianfu 天復 era," since the reign title changed from Guanghua to Tianfu in the early part of 901.

[89] See XZJ 119.486d.

the complete text of Xuefeng's rules, which are entitled "Teacher's regulations" (*Shi guizhi* 師規制).

> Introduction: Those who have become monks first of all follow the monastic rules and regulations, and are solemn and strict in their practice. Once their practice is pure, then it is said, "That person is fit to select an enlightened teacher, and then learn the teachings." Moreover, the correct way is quiescent. It pervades the past and the present, without anyone coming across it; it encompasses the myriad things in the universe, without ever being two. This kind of thing is spoken of in terms of the ways of the world. If, holding steadfastly to the teachings (of Buddhism), one dwells peacefully by relying on the semblance teachings, putting away personal feelings one comes to live together (with other monks in the monastery).[90] One wishes to cause (them to be like) the hundred rivers which all go back to a single source, and the multitude of streams which all reach the great sea. It has been said in the past, "A family does not have two masters, and a country does not have two kings." If a family were to have two masters, there would inevitably be disputes, and if a country were to have two kings there would be competition. It goes without saying that there should be no disputes in a monastery—if there are disputes, those who engage in them are not (true) monks. Should one desire to persevere with religious practice over three lifetimes, everywhere the mind needs to be at ease and there has to be harmony with other people, so that one does not lose track of one's (religious) task.
>
> Rule 1: Those who enter the monastic community and seeks to become monks (lit. "change from white to black") should all serve a single master. If there is one master, rather than two, then disputes would be avoided. The meaning of this can be known by relying on the regulations of my later teacher Furong.
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> Rule 2: The [supervision of] two types of landed estates, the monastery's fields and [lands on that are on] long-term [lease], is to be undertaken by monastic officials who will be rotated annually, and everybody should be involved in it.[91] The permanent property of the stupa has been donated to the monks of this monastery, and should on no account be taken elsewhere.
>
> Rule 3: When in the community there are monks who are old or sick, or when there are some who cannot take care of themselves, then all the young postulants should take care of them. If there are no young postulants, novices should undertake this duty, and if there are no novices in the monastery, then fully ordained monks should look after them. No one should avoid this duty.

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[90] Reading *xiangfa* 象法 (semblance teaching) instead of *xiangfa* 像法, following the XZJ edition rather than Yanagida's edition.

[91] Reading *changji* 長際 (long-term) instead of *zhangji* 張際.

Rule 4: It there are donors from the local villages who with pure hearts politely request ceremonies with Buddhist chants, all those who can perform the Buddhist rites must join in them, so that lay people's scorn or ill will are avoided.

Rule 5: If a novice, a young postulant, or a fully ordained monk who has entered monastic life at this monastery leaves the monastery without appropriate reason and without taking leave from the steward (*zhishi* 知事) and the monastic assembly, in case he were to return to the monastery he should be expelled. If he comes back, having left for an insignificant reason, or if he has not committed grave wrongdoing, he should be allowed to reside in the monastery after he performs a hundred prostrations as punishment for his transgression. If at that time he does not abide by the restrictions, he should also be expelled.

Rule 6: If a resident of the monastery uses a wooden staff even though he is not a steward, and thus disturbs other people, he should be expelled from the monastery during daytime.[92]

Closing section: The above items (lit. "the items on right") about the regulation of religious life should be relied upon by the monastery's overseer (*gangwei* 綱維, a.k.a. *weina* 維那), the steward, and the rest of the monks.[93] They should all together observe the rules, and should not disobey or transgress them. Having finished, one starts again. Proclaimed by monk Yicun on the tenth day of the sixth month, the fourth year of the Guanghua 光化 era (June 28, 901).[94]

Xuefeng's rules are the earliest extant example of monastic rules written by a monk associated with the Chan School. One of the most striking things about them is their conservative character. Xuefeng comes across as stern leader of a large monastery who places great importance on strict discipline as an essential element of monastic life and who seems anxious to impress on his disciples the importance of disciplined religious life. Like the late Chan rules that belong to the "rules of purity" genre, his regulations

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[92] The "wooden staff" mentioned in the text probably refers to the staff used to enforce discipline in the monastery, which could only used by the senior monastic officials. The expulsion from the monastery during daytime probably reflected the greater severity of the punishment, since it was done publicly in front of the whole community in broad daylight.

[93] *Gangwei* can either refer to the three senior monastic officials, the so-called *sangang* 三綱—the abbot (*shangzuo* 上座), the rector (*sizhu* 寺主), and the overseer (*weina* 維那)—or can be used as a synonym for "overseer."

[94] XJZ 119.486d–87b, and Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Zengaku sōsho* (vol. 3), pp. 278–79. For a free Japanese translation, see Ishii, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa*, pp. 480–82.

highlight the central role of disciplined monastic life in the overall soteriological program of Chan School. Their moralistic tone is also very similar to the one in Guishan's treatise on monastic life, which is described in the next chapter. Moreover, Xuefeng's community's economic basis consisted of landed estates, and the monastery also received additional income from the performance of religious rites for the local people. This type of arrangement is much more like that of other large monasteries, and it stands in contrast to the putative self-supporting system of Chan monasticism discussed above.

It is important to note that Xuefeng's rules were written for his own monastery only, and they only dealt with a few specific issues that Xuefeng felt were important for creating conditions that were conducive to the successful religious life of his community. The rules are far from being a comprehensive guide to the organization and daily running of a large monastery, since they do not deal with many vital areas of monastic life. Due to these limitations, Xuefeng's regulations obviously cannot be regarded as a substitute for the Vinaya and the additional customary procedures and practices that governed monastic life during the Tang. The rules' function was only to supplement the broader monastic regulations and provisions by providing concise guidelines on a narrow range of issues that concerned Xuefeng's community. Moreover, there is nothing in the rules to indicate that they were written for a distinct "Chan monastery." It is easy to imagine the same rules being instituted at other monasteries that had no connection with the Chan School.

As noted earlier, the rules created by Xuefeng's teacher Furong are not preserved, and it is not even certain if they ever circulated outside of Furong's monastery. There are no other records of monastic rules written by other Chan monks active during the late Tang period, which makes it difficult to place Xuefeng's rules in the larger context of the evolution of Chan ideas about monastic life. We cannot say whether Guizong's, Furong's,

and Xuefeng's creation of new monastic rules were isolated events, or whether they were part of a broad movement to create new codes of regulations that dealt with issues pertinent to monastic life in the monasteries led by Chan monks. It is plausible that from the mid-ninth century at the earliest at least some Chan monks felt the need to formulate specific rules that governed their religious communities. Nevertheless, even if Xuefeng's rules were a reflection of Chan monks' increased interest in the drafting of new monastic legislation, at the same time they were still very much a part of larger, long-established tradition in Chinese Buddhism that predated the emergence of the Chan School. Chan monks' participation in the creation of new literature about monastic life was only a part of the much broader process of Sinification of the Vinaya and the Indian forms of Buddhist monastic life. An important part of that process was the ongoing creation of new rules that supplemented or expanded on the existing monastic regulations.

An early example of the creation of new monastic regulations by Chinese monks were the three sets of rules created by Daoan 道安 (312–385), one of the great Buddhist leaders from the Six Dynasties period. Daoan created these regulations in order to provide a code of discipline for his large monastic community at a time when there was not yet a complete translation of the Vinaya.[95] Though the exact contents of these regulations is not known, according to Daoan's biography in Huijiao's 慧皎 (497–554) *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, Daoan's regulations consisted of: (1) procedures for offering of incense and ascending the teaching seat to lecture on the Buddhist scriptures, (2) rules about the devotional practices which were performed daily during six fixed periods, and about the

[95] See Daoan's biography in *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 5, T 50.353b, as well as Dobashi Hidetaka 土橋秀高, *Kairitsu no kenkyū* 戒律の研究, pp. 891–95, Sato, *Chūgoku Bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*, pp. 42–53, and Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, pp. 99–100.

rituals that accompanied drinking and eating, and (3) procedures for conducting the repentance of transgressions during the forthrightly *uposatha* (*busa* 布薩) ceremonies.[96] Following Daoan's death, four Vinaya canons were translated during the early fifth century, but even after some of these translations became widely accepted as canonical guides for the regulation of monastic conduct, Chinese monks still continued to create new sets of rules.

Daoan's regulations and similar regulations created by other monks need to be seen as an integral part of a larger undertaking to domesticate Buddhist monastic practice within the world of medieval Chinese society. As the Chinese monastic community's elite was trying to integrate the observance of the Vinaya into the gradually evolving forms of Chinese monastic life, at the same time Chinese monks were also transforming foreign monastic customs and creating new mores and institutional structures that reflected the need to adapt Buddhism to the Chinese social milieu and the native cultural predilections. As a result, the gradually emerging formats in which monastic life was taking place were shaped by the ongoing tensions between the seemingly conflicting sets of conservative and liberal attitudes towards the Vinaya. On one hand, there was a felt need to structure monastic life according to the injunctions of the Vinaya and the traditions of Indian monasticism. At the same time, there was the contradictory urge to deviate from some of the monastic customs and practices that were culturally alien to the Chinese, and to establish new patterns of religious life that were more responsive to the kinds of internal and external pressures to conform to Chinese social norms and cultural sentiments that the monastic order faced from its early beginnings in China. Chinese monastic life during

[96] T 50.353b.

the medieval period was shaped by constant interaction and tension between these two tendencies, and the gradual transformation of monastic practices and institutions was still an ongoing process at the time when the Chan School emerged on China's religious scene.

Although Chinese monks formally accepted the authority of the Vinaya, following Daoan's example a number of noted Chinese monks also wrote manuals concerned with the regulation of monastic life. Examples of such manuals of monastic rules created during the pre-Tang period include Sengqu's 僧璩 (active 441) *Sengni yaoshi* 僧尼要事,[97] Chaodu's 超度 (413–484) *Lüli* 律例,[98] and Huiguang's 慧光 (active c. 508) *Sengzhi shiba tiao* 僧制十八條.[99] None of these texts is extant and we do not know much about their contents, but we do have available a valuable manual of monastic life from the Sui period which sheds light on the contents of this kind of monastic regulations. The manual in question is Zhiyi's 智顗 (538–597) *Li zhifa* 立制法, which provides us with a rare glimpse into the monastic life at Zhiyi's community on Tiantai mountain. The text can be found at the very beginning of *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄, compiled by Guanding 灌頂 (561–632) after Zhiyi's death.[100]

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[97] See his biography in *Gaoseng zhuan* 11, T 50.401b.

[98] The title is listed at the end of Zhidao's biography in *Gaoseng zhuan* 11, T 50.401b.

[99] The text is not extant and its exact contents are not known, but the title is listed in his biography in Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, T 50.608. For all these texts, and additional examples of early Chinese texts about monastic rules and discipline, see Dobashi, *Kairitsu no kenkyū*, pp. 895–96, and Sato, *Chūgoku Bukkyō ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū*, pp. 54–61.

[100] T 46.793–824. For a Japanese translation and study of the whole *Guoqing bailu*, see Ikeda Rosan 池田魯參, *Kokusei hyakuroku no kenkyū* 國清百錄の研究. For translation and study of *Li zhifa* only, see Ikeda's "Tendai Chigi no risseihō." A modified version of the same article can also be found in Ikeda, *Makashikan kenkyū josetsu* 摩訶止觀研究序說, pp. 253–76. A brief description of the contents of *Li zhifa* can also be found in Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai

The structure of Zhiyi's text is similar to the one we saw in Xuefeng's rules. It consists of an introductory paragraph that is followed by ten items, each of which defines appropriate procedures about specific aspect of monastic life, with the final item serving as a closing summary. Zhiyi's text presents a picture of a contemplative monastic community in which the monks pursued their religious vocations through a regimented lifestyle that included communal rites and meditation (*zuochan* 坐禪), solitary periods of cultic practice devoted to repentance rituals (*biechang chanhui* 別場懺悔), and participation in the daily work of ruining the monastery (*zhi sengshi* 知僧事). The communal practice was undertaken in a meditation hall, and it consisted of four periods of seated meditations and six periods of Buddhist ceremonies.[101] The solitary practice of repentance rituals took place at a separate location, and consisted of the cultivation of the four forms of samādhi (*sizhong sanmei* 四種三昧).[102]

In addition to the regular daily periods of formal religious practice in the meditation hall, some of the monks at Tiantai mountain were also involved in managing the monastery's practical affairs. They also performed some physical work, very much like the monks in the community described by *Chanmen guishi*. Those monks who transgressed monastic regulations were to be punished according to the severity of their transgressions. Some of the punishments mentioned by Zhiyi are the same as the ones mentioned by Xuefeng and the author of *Chanmen guishi*—making ritual bowing in cases of lesser infractions, and expulsion from the community in cases of serious offenses.[103]

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Buddhism," pp. 45–48.

[101] See items 2 and 3, T 46.793c.

[102] See item 4, T 46.793c.

[103] See items 7–9, T 46.794a.

The regimented contemplative monastic lifestyle depicted by Zhiyi bears a striking resemblance to later records of Chan monastic life. There are noticeable similarities between *Li zhifa*'s account of the organization and functioning of a Sui monastery and *Chanmen guishi*'s depiction of tenth century "Chan monastery."[104] The similarities are such that one is even tempted to say that in Zhiyi's monastic manual we have an early forerunner of the Song Chan genre of "rules of purity."

It is essential to understand that neither Zhiyi's rules nor any of those that preceded them were intended to replace the Vinaya. Rather, the new rules created by medieval Chinese monks were grafted onto the existing body of monastic regulations, which in addition to the Vinaya also included the Bodhisattva precepts and the sets of legal regulations imposed on the monastic community by the secular authorities. I think that the monastic rules produced during the late Tang by such Chan monks as Xuefeng were created with the same understanding, and that the same is also true of the Chan monastic regulations created during the Song period. Rather than seeing the creation of monastic rules by Chan monks as a novel development that signaled Chan's rejection of existing monastic institutions and establishment of an independent system of monasticism, it seems more appropriate to interpret these events as just another chapter in the unfolding story of the Chinese transformation of Buddhism. Chan monks' monastic rules were very much part of a long tradition of monastic innovation in the area of religious legislation. While these rules added a few new elements to Chinese monastic life that reflected the soteriological outlook of the Chan School, at the same time they also reflected Chan's place as an integral part of the mainstream Buddhist monastic

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[104] Ikeda has suggested that Zhiyi's rules can be called the "Rules of Purity of Guoqing Monastery" ("Guojingsi qinggui" 國清寺清規). Ikeda, "Tendai Chigi no risseihō," p. 89.

tradition.

## The Institutional Context of Chan Practice

Most current interpretations of the Hongzhou School's religious doctrines and practices encompass a latent paradox. On one hand, the Hongzhou School is characterized as a revolutionary movement initiated by Mazu that rejected the doctrines, practices, and institutions of the preceding Buddhist traditions. According to Yanagida Seizan's interpretation, Mazu performed a truly revolutionary role in the history of Chinese Buddhism by establishing a new form of practical Buddhism, which rejected the authority of tradition and scripture. Mazu's new Buddhism stood in contrast to all earlier Buddhism, which honored the words of the Buddha and accepted the precepts as norms of ethical behavior.[105] Yet, while scholars like Yanagida eulogize the Hongzhou School's iconoclast stance—characterized by strong anti-institutional and anti-traditionalist tendencies—they are also aware that the Hongzhou School was above all a monastic tradition. The biography of virtually every noted Chan teacher belonging to the Hongzhou School make it clear that they were ordained as monks in the same manner as other Chinese monks. Even after coming in contact with Mazu's supposedly iconoclastic teachings, his disciples continued their monastic vocations, and they also expected their own disciples to do likewise.

The fact that in the midst of their putative revolution Yanagida's iconoclastic revolutionaries remained members of the same stale, conservative monastic establishment they supposedly rejected carries a sense of incongruity that needs to be resolved. The

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[105] Yahagida, "Basozen no sho mondai," IBK 17/1, p. 37. See also the summary of Yanagida's views in the Introduction.

fixation on the legend about Baizhang's establishment of a new form of Chan monasticism can be seen as an attempt to resolve this paradox (albeit an unsuccessful one). The reasoning here seems to evolve along the following lines: Yes, Mazu and his disciples remained monks, but they were a *different* kind of monks. Chan's "pure rules," first instituted by Baizhang, were an expression of the independent spirit of Mazu's new Buddhism, says Yanagida.[106] Thus, the Hongzhou School's revolution was carried from the sphere of religious ideas and practices into the sphere of religious institutions, resulting into a radical overhauling of monastic life and establishment of a separate system of Chan monasticism.

The Hongzhou School's putative rejection of the Vinaya and the rest of the monastic tradition stand in sharp contrast to the institutional stance of the Northern School, the main tradition of early Chan. Many important monks associated with the Northern School were noted for their expertise in the Vinaya, and in Northern School texts there is emphasis on the importance of strict observance of the precepts as an essential part of authentic religious life.[107] Moreover, many Northern School monks resided at monasteries that were well known as centers for the study and observance of the precepts. These tendencies can already be observed in the life of Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706), who after his ordination studied the Vinaya, and who for over two decades resided at Yuquan monastery 玉泉寺 in Jingzhou 荊州 (present-day Dangyang 當陽 county in Hubei province), which was an important center of Vinaya—as well as Tiantai

[106] Yanagida, "Goroku no rekishi," p. 250.

[107] For a study of the relationship between the Northern School and the Vinaya, see Shiina, "Hakushūzen ni okeru kairitsu no mondai" 北宗禪における戒律の問題, SK 11 (1969), pp. 139–52.

and Pure Land—studies.[108] Puji 普寂 (651–739), Shenxiu's best-known disciple, who joined his teacher in Jingzhou, was also known as a student of the Vinaya. Moreover, there was a considerable overlap between some the Vinaya lineages and the genealogy of the Northern School.[109]

The notion that beginning with Baizhang (or perhaps even earlier), the Chan School rejected existing monastic mores and institutions is homologous to the presupposition that beginning with the Hongzhou School the Chan movement underwent a sudden transformation that might be called a "secularizing turn." This kind of view is expressed by Yanagida, who has written that with the emergence of the Hongzhou School Chan embraced everyday life as the ideal avenue for practice, which mainly consisted in interaction between a master and a student, and precluded "any attachment to traditional Buddhist religious practices and scriptural exegesis."[110] Yanagida also suggests that, having rejected the trappings of traditional Buddhist monasticism, Chan monks led ordinary lives similar to those of ordinary people, without quite explaining, if that was

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[108] See John R. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, pp. 47, 50–51, and Shiina, "Hakushūzen ni okeru kairitsu no mondai," pp. 145, 148–49.

[109] Shiina, "Hakushūzen ni okeru kairitsu no mondai," p. 144. The view that there is a sharp contrast between Northern School's conservative stance towards the Vinaya and the Hongzhou School's putative rejection of it, articulated by Shiina, reflects the strong influence of later notions of Chan orthodoxy on contemporary scholarship, which creep even in otherwise solid research that is on the whole sympathetic towards the "heterodox" Northern School. See Ibid., p. 139. This kind of comparison between the two traditions goes hand in hand with other scholars' view that distinctive Chan monastic life already began to emerge at Daoxin's and Hongren's monastic communities, and that the Hongzhou School was the orthodox successor to their tradition. The idea that the Hongzhou School appropriated and further developed the independent spirit of Chan monasticism that first emerged at the time of Daoxin and Hongren, while the Northern School deviated from it by aligning itself with mainstream monastic institutions, in effect perpetuates the biased view of such early Song texts as CDL, which present the Hongzhou School as an orthodox Chan lineages and relegate the Northern School to a role of minor collateral lineage.

indeed the case, why they bothered to remain monks at all.[111] The novel self-supporting monastic lifestyle supposedly adopted by Chan monks, which was discussed above, is often cited as an evidence the Chan monks led productive lives very much like the lives of the common people.[112]

These kinds of interpretation of Chan monks' rejection of mainstream monastic mores and adoption of more secular values and lifestyles are for the most part based on selective reading and questionable interpretation of apocryphal iconoclastic dialogues and stories that appear in Song collections of Chan materials. But it is also true that when the subitist rhetoric that characterizes passages from the literature about the Hongzhou School is taken at face value, without careful consideration of the institutional context in which it developed, it might appear that Chan teachers did aim at deconstructing some of the basic religious notions and structures on which traditional Buddhism depended ever since its early inception in India. Let us, for example, consider the description of the Hongzhou School's doctrines presented in Zongmi's writings:

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[110] Yanagida, "The 'Recorded Sayings' Texts," p. 187.

[111] In a less radical fashion (and without implying that Chan monks were not living as monks), Robert Buswell has written that Chan attempted to make "the *summum bonum* of Buddhism [viz. enlightenment] readily accessible to ordinary people living active, engaged lives in the world, and not just to religious specialists ensconced in isolated mountain monasteries." Buswell, "The 'Short-cut' approach of *K'an-hua* Meditation: The Evolution of Practical Subitism in Chinese Ch'an Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Buddhism*, p. 325. In a later publication, Buswell expressed reservations about this statement, and affirmed the primacy of monastic life in the practice of Chan. See Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience*, p. 222.

[112] See Kagamishima, "Hyakujō shingi no seiritsu to sono igi," p. 130. Japanese scholars have taken up such an elitist monastic tradition as Chan and turned it into some kind of popular religious movement. One can only imagine how appealing Chan School's "practical" teachings about sudden enlightenment and its strong rationalizing tendencies—which included downplaying of the spiritual efficacy of ritual and magic, demotion of the gods and the spirits, rejection of mundane benefits and

> All dharmas, whether existent or empty, are nothing but the true nature. The true nature is devoid of characteristics and is inactive. Its essence cannot be described in any way: it is neither profane nor holy, neither cause nor effect, neither good nor evil. However, through its functioning the essence can manifest in numerous ways; it can manifest as profane or holy, with form and appearance....[113] This very thing that is capable of speech and physical activity, of desire, anger, compassion and patience, capable of giving rise to good and evil, and experiencing suffering and joy is precisely your Buddha-nature. This is the original Buddha, and outside of it there is no other Buddha. Because of the spontaneous nature of this fundamental reality it is impossible to arouse the mind to cultivate the Way. The Way is mind, and mind cannot be cultivated with mind; evil is also mind, and mind cannot be extinguished by mind. Neither extinguishing nor cultivating, just being oneself and acting in a natural way, that is liberation.[114]

When taken out of context, passages like this might seem to suggest that Mazu and his followers rejected any distinctions between the mundane and the sacred. The passage can also be read as implying that they discarded the usefulness of any kind of religious cultivation as a form of conditioned activity that cannot reveal the holistic nature of ultimate reality, which fully manifests itself both in the totality and particularity of all things and events. This interpretation can even be stretched further, so that it conveys the impression that perhaps the Hongzhou School blurred the boundaries between monastic and secular lifestyles and practices.

Such clear-cut obliteration of all conventional distinctions between the religious (monastic) and the mundane (secular) obviously did not occur. That becomes quite

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focus on abstract religious goals such as awakening to the formless, un–localized nature of reality — would have been to medieval illiterate peasants.

[113] Up to this point, Zongmi describes the teaching of "direct disclosure of the mind's nature." He considers both the Hongzhou School and the Heze School of Shenhui, to which he claimed to be a representative, as belonging to this tradition. He identifies this approach to religious practice with the tathāgatagarbha doctrine, especially as found in the *Huayan Scripture*.

[114] *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu*, T 48.402c; translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, p. 40.

apparent when we consider the contents of *Guishan jingce* (examined in the next chapter), which presents a clear statement of the importance of disciplined monastic life as a basic prerequisite for Chan practice. Chan was primarily a monastic tradition, and the leading figures of the tradition were almost without exception monks. As was already noted, when we examine the religious views and practices of Chan Laymen like Pang Yun, or noted literati like Pei Xiu and Bo Juyi (both of whom were students of Chan), it becomes clear that all of them accepted monastic life as the most authentic religious lifestyle, and tried to model their religious lives on those of the Chan monks with whom they associated, and whom they accepted as their spiritual mentors.[115]

Considering the monastic character of the Hongzhou School, any interpretation of its doctrines and practices cannot be divorced from the monastic institutional context in which they were developed and enacted. When Mazu stated that "Ordinary mind is the way," he spoke to monks living in a medieval monastery. The context in which Mazu gave this particular teaching and the audience to which it was directed make it clear that the ordinary mind realized by a Chan adept was to be realized within the disciplined daily regiment of his monastery. Spiritual freedom was to be realized by letting go of wrong ideas and attachments *within* the strictures of monastic life, rather than through antinomian rejection of monastic mores and traditions. To divorce such Chan teachings as ordinary mind and no-mind from their original monastic origins (as it is done in virtually all works on Chan/Zen) most often leads to whimsical interpretations of their purport and significance.[116]

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[115] See the discussion of their religious practice presented in Chapter Eight.

[116] The almost universal focus on iconoclastic Chan dialogues as the main records of late Tang Chan School's religious practice is directly related by the failure to properly consider the monastic milieu in

The actualization of the Chan experience of spiritual freedom took place in conservative institutional context that took adherence to established religious mores and clearly defined moral norms as a matter of course. When the monastic context of the tradition is fully taken into account, then the statements of the Chan teachers assume meanings different from those often imputed to them both in popular and scholarly Zen literature. Though on the level of ultimate reality the Hongzhou School asserted that all things are manifestations of the true mind and all distinctions are ultimately equal, on the level of conventional reality all distinctions were very real. While perfect spontaneity and freedom amidst the myriad distractions of everyday life is the ultimate goal of religious practice, that goal was to be achieved only after a long process of disciplined monastic practice.

Unfortunately, despite the importance of monastic institutions for our understanding of Chan doctrine and practice, we know little about the details of the organization of the monasteries of mid-Tang Chan monks, or about the scheduling of their daily life. As we will see in the next chapter, *Guishan qingce*, the only text produced by the Hongzhou School that explicitly deals with monastic life, does provide valuable information about Hongzhou School's attitudes towards monasticism. The text also shows how disciplined monastic practice was central to Chan's soteriological schemata, and how the ethical thrust of Chan thought was by-and-large shaped by the mainstream values of Buddhist monasticism. At the same time, the texts tell us little about the actual

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which Chan monks led their religious life. Even without considering the late apocryphal origin of these literary sources, the incongruity between their descriptions of Chan monks' eccentric actions and the solemn and conservative formats of the institutional and religious environments in which they were actually active should have raised doubts about the usefulness of such materials as sources for the study of Chan soteriology.

organization of the monasteries and the daily activities of the monks. Could it be that this silence about the daily life of Chan monks is conveying something? The lack of any discussion of the details of monks' daily life might mean that there was nothing exceptional about it that was deemed worth recording, because the large monasteries controlled by Guishan and other Chan monks were not radically different from other public monasteries, whose organization and mode of operation were so well known that there was no need to write about it.

It is interesting to note that even later Chan texts that are used as primary evidence for the establishment of distinctive Chan monastic life, such as *Chanmen guishi* and the monastic codes that belong to the "rules of purity" genre (especially *Chanyuan qinggui*), contain little that is unique to the Chan School. These ostensibly sectarian Chan documents present a relatively conservative picture of contemplative monastic life, most aspects of which can be traced to sources outside of the Chan tradition. Let us consider the following quotation about the relationship between monastic life and Chan practice from *Chanyuan qinggui*, the oldest extant Chan monastic code compiled in 1103.

> All the Buddhas of the three times attain enlightenment after leaving home (*chujia* 出家) [and becoming monks]. The twenty-eight Indian and six Chinese patriarchs through whom the seal of the Buddha mind was transmitted were all monks. For only by strictly adhering to the Vinaya can one set a standard that reaches throughout the three worlds. For this reason, in practicing Chan and investigating the Way the precepts are considered primary. If one is not free from transgressions and able to prevent wrongdoing, then how can he attain Buddhahood or become a patriarch.[117]

[117] Kagamishima, trans., *Zenen shingi*, p. 13; translation adapted from Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" p. 81.

The importance of disciplined monastic life that is based on the Vinaya, so unequivocally stated in the above passage, can easily be taken as representative of mainstream views about monastic life that can be traced to any period of Chinese Buddhist history, from the beginnings of Buddhism in China during the Later Han 後漢 dynasty (25–220) to the present. Though the passage refers to the mythic lineage of Chan patriarchs and presents the prospect of membership in it as the goal of religious practice, there is nothing particularly "Chan-like" about its perspective towards monastic life and the Vinaya. There is no reason to assume that the mid-Tang Chan School was any different in this respect. Quite to the contrary, the view presented in the above quotation is in perfect agreement with the views about monastic life expressed in *Guishan jingce*.

*Chanmen guishi*, the earliest text to present a description of a "Chan monastery," depicts a contemplative monastic community headed by a wise and experienced "Elder" (*zhanglao* 長老), who presumably was a Chan teacher. The monks who resided in that community adhered to a regimented austere lifestyle in which there was a focus on formal meditation in the Sangha Hall (*sengtang* 僧堂). Other activities mentioned in the text are attendance at public lectures given by the abbot in the Dharma Hall, and periods of communal work. The text makes clear that strict adherence to monastery's regulation was expected from all the monks, and major infractions of monastic discipline were stiffly punished, and could result in expulsion from the monastery.

The whole text of *Chanmen guishi* has already been studied adequately, and there is no need to go over its contents again.[118] Here it will suffice to say that, despite brief statements about Baizhang's role as an originator of a new form of Chan monastic life at

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[118] See Foulk, "The 'Ch'an School,'" pp. 328–79, and Collcutt, "The Early Ch'an Monastic Rule."

the beginning and end of the text, the main body of the text presents a broad outline of monastic life in which there is little that is new and different from mainstream Chinese monasticism. Yifa's (formerly Yumei Yang) recent research on this text and other early Chan monastic codes has demonstrated that the regulations and practices that appear in the Chan monastic codes trace their origins to the Vinaya texts and other related commentarial literature, or were shaped by developments in Buddhist monasticism influenced by its interactions with Chinese culture.[119] Thus, even *Chanmen guishi*, the text that that was probably most responsible for the wide-spread diffusion of the Baizhang legend, and which is the main source for all sectarian descriptions of a distinct system of Chan monasticism, in the end turns out to be little more than a conventional description of a medieval Chinese monastery.

## Concluding Remarks

The legend about Baizhang's establishment of a distinct Chan monastery was probably popularized, or perhaps invented, by those elements with the Chan School that during the second half of the tenth century were anxious to establish some clearer form of Chan proto-sectarian identity. The notion of a distinct form of monastic life that was peculiar to Chan reflected efforts to delineate ways in which Chan was unique vis-à-vis the other traditions of Chinese Buddhism. Examination of the extant sources reveals that Baizhang himself was not directly involved in the codification of a distinct type of Chan monastic life. Not only that, but there is no evidence that during the Tang there was a concentrated

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[119] This is the conclusion of an unpublished paper by Yifa, "The Chan Regulations and the Lu Vinaya: Is the Chan Monastic Code a Declaration of Independence?" See also her 1996 Yale dissertation, "The Rules of Purity of the Chan Monastery: An Annotated Translation and Study of the *Chanyuan qinggui*."

effort to establish a uniquely Chan system of monasticism. As a whole, the Hongzhou was an integral part of the mainstream monastic order.

The prevalent views about Chan's institutional independence articulated by Japanese scholars are based on uncritical acceptance of a set of untenable assumptions about the institutional history of Chan, and on problematic interpretations and use of the available sources. None of the "evidence" about the distinctive features of Chan monasticism presented by them—such as Chan monks' institution of communal work in their communities—provides solid proof of the Chan School's institutional independence from the rest of Chinese Buddhism. Not only is there no evidence that these features of monastic life were widely accepted by Chan monks, but most of them could also be found in other monastic communities, and thus they were not unique to any particular school of Chinese Buddhism. Furthermore, even if some of the monasteries that were headed by Chan teachers did posses those specific features, in itself that does not constitute a valid proof of Chan's institutional independence along sectarian lines like the ones that presently exists among the Japanese and Tibetan Buddhist sects.

During the ninth century, some Chan monks started to write rules for their own monasteries. The creation of such new monastic regulations, however, was not unique to the Chan School, and had a long history that predated the emergence of Chan. Furthermore, the earliest extant specimen of this type of regulations, the rules written by Xuefeng for his monastery, contains little that is unique to the Chan School. Their restricted scope also makes it clear that their purpose was only to supplement the Vinaya and the other pertinent monastic regulations. Whatever new monastic regulations were created by Chan monks, they were grafted into the existing body of monastic legislation, and were meant to supplement or clarify rather then replace existing regulations.

Although we do not know much about the organization of the monasteries in which Chan monks lived during the Tang period, it is probable that there was a gradual introduction of new elements in the structuring of monks' daily life and religious training that reflected the beliefs, doctrines, and practices of the Chan School. But even as Chan monks were participating in the ongoing transformation of Chinese Buddhist monastic institutions, at no time did they set themselves apart from those same institutions. The transformation of Chinese monasticism was a gradual process that was not restricted to the Chan School, and Chan monks participated in it from *within* rather than from outside of the established monastic traditions.

Accordingly, although the Chan School during the Tang did not establish anything resembling a full-fledged system of Chan monasticism that was independent from other mainstreams monastic institutions, that does not mean that the monasteries headed by Chan monks did not differentiate themselves in some ways. Chan monks' awareness that they belonged to a distinct religious tradition probably led to the introduction of specific forms of monastic practice and organization (or at least of reorganization of existing ones) that were peculiar to the Chan School. Unfortunately, at present we know too little about both Chan communities as well as the rest of monastic institutions in Tang China to be able to make clear distinctions between those aspects of monastic life that were characteristic of the wider monastic community and those that were peculiar to Chan. We can, however, say that for the most part those differences were minor and did not constitute such a large gap between Chan and other monasteries that it would have been difficult to bridge.

Though in his biography of Baizhang and in his brief history of Chinese monasticism Zanning was simply recording a popular legend about Baizhang's role as a

promulgator of Chan monasticism, he was at the same time also well aware of the realities of monastic life during the early Song.[120] There must have been a sense in which the Chan School was a distinctive tradition during the early Song period, and Zanning was responding to that prevalent perception. At the same time, that identity was also quite elastic, and there was no clear line of demarcation between Chan and the rest of Buddhism. Chan monks were above all Buddhist monks, and in that respect they were not different from the rest of the monks in China. Chan monks' adherence to specific doctrines and practices, and their predilection for constructing religious identities in light of spiritual genealogies, did instill in them a sense of membership in a loosely structured religious confraternity. But that awareness of their tradition's singularity was firmly integrated within their basic identity as members of the monastic order. The Chan School managed to create its distinct identity by carving a place for itself at the very center of the Buddhist monastic tradition. Indeed, the scope of Chan's place expanded so much that during the Song period it eventually came to encompass virtually the whole of the Chinese Buddhist tradition.

[120] See *Da Song sengshi lüe* 大宋僧史略, T 54.240a-b, and SGSZ 10, T 50.770c.

Chapter 10

# *Guishan Jingce* and the Moral Basis of Chan Soteriology

In order to present additional evidence and strengthen the argument about the relationship between the Hongzhou School and the Buddhist monastic tradition presented in the preceding chapter, in this chapter I will focus on *Guishan jingce* 潙山警策, a text composed by Baizhang's disciple Guishan Lingyou 潙山靈祐 (771–853). This text is by far the most important Tang source that deals with the relationship between Chan and monasticism, created by a monk who was arguably the main third-generation leader of the Hongzhou School. With its focus on the attitudes of the Hongzhou movement towards traditional Buddhist values and practices, especially the observance of monastic discipline and the importance of ethical norms in religious life, this seminal treatise provides invaluable information about the conservative side of Chan Buddhism. On the basis of the contents of this text, we are able to examine further the level of correspondence between the religious ideals presented in Chan texts and the actual behavior and practices of Chan monks, and ascertain the ways Chan monks integrated monastic discipline into their religious life.

Despite its importance as the main extant document from the ninth century that directly deals with the place of monasticism in the Chan quest for religious awakening, *Guishan jingce* has for the most part been ignored by modern scholarship. That should perhaps come as no surprise. Its contents contravene virtually all the prevalent interpretations of Chan's institutional history during the Tang dynasty that we discussed

in the last chapter. Because of its great importance and the lack of previous studies on it, here I will present a translation of the original text, which will be accompanied by a running commentary. But before I turn to the text itself, I will first briefly introduce its author and examine the text's provenance and early history, and provide some background information about the historical circumstances and the milieu in which it was created.

## Guishan's Life

Guishan was born in the Zhao 趙 family, whose home was in Zhangqi 長溪, Fuzhou 福州 prefecture (in present-day Fujian province).[1] Nothing is known about his family's socioeconomic background, and there is little information about his early life. Guishan became a novice at the age of fifteen at Jianshan monastery 建善寺, which was located in his native province. Sometime during his late teens he traveled north to Hangzhou 杭州 (Zhejiang province), where he was ordained at Longxing monastery 龍興寺. The move probably occurred around 790, when he approached the appropriate age for receiving full ordination. During his stay in Hangzhou, Guishan studied the Buddhist scriptures and the Vinaya.[2] In 793, at the age of twenty-two, he traveled to the northern part of Jiangxi, the area that was the main geographical center of the Hongzhou School. When visiting Letan monastery 泐潭寺 on Shimen mountain 石門山, the place where Mazu was buried six years earlier, he met with Baizhang, who at that time was residing close to his teacher's

[1] The main source for Guishan's life is Zheng Yu's 鄭愚 (d.u.) stele inscription, *Tanzhou Daguishan Tongqingsi Dayuan chanshi beiming bingxu* 潭州大溈山同慶寺大圓禪師碑銘并序, in QTW 820.3832c, and *Tang wencui* 唐文粹 63.6b–8b. The inscription was composed in 866, thirteen years after Guishan's death, following the bestowal of imperial title to him in 863, and the construction of his memorial pagoda in 865. Other sources are his biographies in SGSZ 11, T 50.777a-b, CDL 9.149–52, and ZTJ 16.359–63.

[2] CTL 9.149 (T 51.264b).

memorial pagoda. Guishan became Baizhang's disciple, and started his study of Chan with him.[3] Later Guishan followed his teacher when the latter moved to Baizhang mountain, and altogether he stayed with Baizhang for well over a decade.

Sometime around 810, Guishan moved to Dagui mountain 大潙山 (a.k.a. Gui mountain 潙山, located in Hunan province), the mountain with which he is most closely associated, and whose name is commonly used to refer to him.[4] He was to spend the rest of his life at the mountain. Gradually a number of monks came to study with him, and his Tongqing monastery 同慶寺 became one of the main centers of the Hongzhou School. Guishan had a long and successful teaching career. In addition to his numerous monastic disciples, which included such famous Chan teachers as Yangshan Huiji 仰山慧寂 (807–833) and Xiangyan Zhixian 香嚴智閑 (d.u.), he also attracted a number of noted lay disciples and supporters. One of his most distinguished lay supporters was Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860), the noted official and lay Buddhist.[5] Guishan's funeral inscription, composed by Zheng Yu 鄭愚 of Fanyu (present-day Guangzhou), states that Pei Xiu met with Guishan in 846, after the ending of the anti-Buddhist persecution initiated by emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840–846).

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[3] According to the ZTJ biography, before his journey to Jiangxi, Guishan briefly visited Tiantai mountain 天台山 and Guoqing monastery 國清寺, the monastic center of the Tiantai School. There he met with Hanshan 寒山 and Shide 拾得, the two famous recluses and poets. ZTJ 16.360. The same story is also recorded in Guishan's biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.777b.

[4] Following the CDL biography. However, according to the SGSZ biography, he resided in Changsha 長沙 until around 820, and then moved to the near-by Gui mountain (which was located in Changsha-fu).

[5] Pei's official biographies are in JTS 177.4592–93, and XTS 182.5371–72. For a thorough study of his life, which places substantial emphasis on his Buddhist activities, see Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫, "Hai Kyū den: Tōdai no ichi shidaifu to bukkyō" 裴休傳—唐代の一士大夫と佛教, TG 64 (1992), pp. 115–277.

During the persecution Guishan had to flee his monastery, which was either destroyed or seriously damaged, and disguise himself as a layman. During the early stage of the restoration of Buddhism that was initiated soon after the next emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859) ascended to the throne, Pei Xiu (who at the time served as a civil governor of Hunan) offered support to Tongqing monastery.[6] At that time, Pei also received religious instructions from Guishan.[7] Other noted officials who were Guishan's disciples and supporters included Li Jingrang 李景讓 (d.u.), who probably met Guishan while he was serving as a civil governor of Shannan-dao 山南道 during the Dazhong 大中 era (847–860),[8] and Cui Shenyou 崔慎由 (d.u.), who during the same period was a civil governor of Hunan.[9] It was in response to Li's petition that the court granted the name Tongqing to Guishan's monastery.[10] Furthermore, the author of Guishan's first stele inscription—which was probably composed two or three year after his death and was subsequently lost—was Lu Jianqiu 盧簡求 (789–846),[11] and the calligraphy for the inscription was done by the famous poet Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812–858).[12]

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[6] According to *Tanzhou daguishan zhongxing ji* 潭州大潙山中興記, which is included in *Shimen weizi chan* 石門文字禪 21, *Zenshū zensho* 95, p. 282a, Pei Xiu donated landed estate to Guishan's monastic community to supply the monks with food provisions. Relevant passages from this text are also quoted in Yoshikawa, "Hai Kyū den," p. 165.

[7] *Tangwen cui* 63, vol. 2, p. 12; QTW 820.3832c; CTL 9.149 (T 51.264c). See also Jeffrey Broughton, "Kuei-feng Tsung-mi: Convergence of Ch'an and the Teaching," p. 35.

[8] See SGSZ 11, T 50.777c, and Suzuki, *Tō-Godai no zenshū*, pp. 29–30. For Li's biographies, see JTS 187b.4891–92, and XTS 177.5290–91.

[9] For Cui, see JTS 177.4577–80.

[10] See SGSZ 11, T 50.777c, and Yoshikawa, "Hai Kyū den," p. 164.

[11] Biographies in JTS 163.4271–73, and XTS 177.5284–85. Lu was also the author of the stele inscription for Mazu's disciple Yanguan Jian, entitled *Hangzhou Yanguanxian Haichangyuan Chanmen dashi tabei* 杭州鹽官縣海昌院禪門大師塔碑, in QTW 733.3354b-c, and WYYH 868.4578a–79a. Moreover, QTW 733 also contains another short inscription by Lu, similarly entitled

According to *Chuandeng lu*, Guishan's teaching career lasted over fourty years, from around 810 until his death in 853.[13] In 863, eleven years after his death, Guishan received the imperially bestowed title Dayuan Chanshi 大圓禪師 (Chan Teacher of Great Perfection). Around the same time Emperor Yizong 懿宗 (r. 860–874) also conferred the appellation Qingjing 清靜 on his memorial pagoda.

Guishan and his best-known disciple Yangshan were among the most influential Chan monks of their generations. The posthumous rise of Baizhang as the greatest disciple of Mazu was probably to a large extent due to the fact that Guishan and Yangshan's group was the main representative of the Hongzhou School during the middle part of the ninth century. By the later part of the tenth century, Guishan and Yangshan came to be acknowledged as the putative "founders" of the Guiyang School 潙仰宗 of Chan, the earliest of the so-called five Chan schools that were recognized by the post-Tang Chan tradition.[14]

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*Chanmen dashi beiyin ji* 禪門大師碑陰記, which immediately precedes the inscription mentioned above.

[12] Li's biographies are in JTS 190c.5077–78, and XTS 203.5792–93. For an annotated Japanese translation of the JTS biography, see Ogawa Tamaki 小川環樹, ed., *Tōdai no shijin: sono denki* 唐代の詩人—その傳記, pp. 527–33. Li was also the author of *Tang Zizhou huiyijingshe nanchanyuan sizhengtang beiming* 唐梓州慧義精舍南禪院四證堂碑銘, QTW 780.3608b–09c, an inscription that commemorates Mazu, Xitang, Wuxiang, and Wuzhu. Lu's composition of Guishan's inscription and Li's writing of its caligraphy are also recorded in Guishan's biography in SGSZ 11, T 50.777c. It is possible that this inscription was available to Zanning when he was compiling SGSZ in the 980s, and that he based his biography of Guishan on it.

[13] CTL 9.152 ( T 51.265c28). ZTJ has "forty-two years" instead. ZTJ 16.363 (K 45.335c).

[14] The earliest mention of Guiyang as a separate Chan lineage (*pai* 派) is in Fayan Wenyi's 法眼文益 (885–958) *Zongmen shigui lun* 宗門十規論, XZJ 110.439d. There the Gui-Yang lineage is mentioned along with the Deshan 德山, Linji 臨濟, Caodong 曹洞, Xuefeng 雪峰, and Yunmen 雲門 lineages.

## The Historical Context

Before proceeding to a discussion of *Guishan jingce*, let us briefly consider the broader historical context of Guishan's life and work. Guishan was born in the aftermath of the devastating An Lushan rebellion. Following the end of the rebellion in 763, the Tang empire was attacked by the Tibetans in same year, and there was also a rebellion initiated by Pugu Huaien, a Tang general of Turkish descend, which ended in 765, as well as many other local rebellions.[15] The precarious situation led to an erosion of Tang's political stability, and a shift of power from the center in Changan towards the provinces, which were often ruled by semi-autonomous warlords. During this period of social and political instability Buddhism continued to enjoy imperial patronage and popular support. Emperor Daizong (r. 762–779) was a dedicated supporter of Buddhism, and his successor Dezong (r. 779–805), after his early unsuccessful attempts to reduce the size of the Buddhist church, also become a patron of Buddhism.[16]

At a time when the economic and political power of the central government was limited, imperial support was only one of the factors that contributed to the flourishing of Buddhism during this period. During Guishan's lifetime, Buddhism was popular among the commoners and the elites alike, and Buddhist beliefs, rituals, and practices were all integral part of Chinese social and cultural life. The late eight and early ninth century was a time when Buddhism dominated the intellectual and religious life of the Tang empire. This was a period of rapid expansion for the Chan School, with the Hongzhou School establishing itself as the vanguard of the whole Chan movement.

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[15] Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 77–78.

[16] Ibid., pp. 77–99.

Despite its flourishing during this period, however, Buddhism was also beset by numerous problems. As often happens with religious traditions during periods of large institutional expansion and amassing of economic resources, the Buddhist church's great power and influence in Chinese society were also harbingers of a sense of complacency. According to some, they were also increasingly becoming causes of deep-seated institutional corruption and moral decay. As Buddhist institutions grew in size and wealth, they also attracted increasing numbers of persons who entered monkhood for reasons other that religious piety. This led to the downgrading of the quality of new recruits for the clergy. The base quality of a large part of the clergy in turn posed a serious problem for the spiritual well being of the Buddhist community, as well as for its position vis-à-vis the state and the wider society. Since Buddhist monks and nuns were widely perceived as the main representatives of Buddhism, they were supposed to lead pious lives that exemplified Buddhist mores and spiritual values. Their failure to live up to those religious standards reflected badly on the whole Buddhist religion. Because of that, monastic corruption was a valid target for the critics of Buddhism. For the most part, the main critics were pro-Confucian officials with anti-Buddhist sentiments, who represented a small but potentially vocal minority of the officialdom.

The problem of monastic corruption was of course by no means unique to the Tang period. Throughout its history, the Buddhist Sangha had always included a wide variety of people, pious and otherwise, who entered the monastic order for a number of reasons. This kind of situation is also reflected in the Indian Vinaya literature, which is full of graphic stories featuring monks who engage in what seems to be virtually every conceivable vice. Nonetheless, the quality of the Buddhist clergy worsened during the post-rebellion period with the increase in the number of new members of the clergy,

which was in large part due to the government's policy of selling ordination certificates in order to raise cash for its treasury.[17] Although the policy was introduced in 755 as an expedient measure initiated after the outbreak of the rebellion in order to raise revenue for military expenditures, the practice became widespread and long-lasting, with adverse effects for both the state and the Buddhist church. The lure of quick money was too difficult to resist for many subsequent governments until the end of the dynasty, even though the release of large numbers of able-bodied adults from tax obligations had disastrous long-term effects on the state economy. To make matters worse, unscrupulous local officials, many of whom came to enjoy expanded power and independence during the post-rebellion period, joined in the lucrative business of selling ordination certificates to anyone who could afford it.

As a result of these developments, there was a huge influx of people who joined the Buddhist order in order to avoid paying taxes and being subjected to corvée labor.[18] Most of these individuals did not have any religious motivation, and were unwilling to adhere to the numerous restrictions on personal behavior that monastic life imposed. The presence of large number of fraudulent "monks" reinforced existing perceptions about monastic laxity and corruption. Such a situation also most likely created serious problems for those religious-minded monks who were sincere in the pursuit of their vocation. The widespread perception that monks were corrupt and were taking undue advantage of their privileged status was probably one of the reasons why Emperor Wuzong was able to

[17] For a discussion of the sale of ordination certificates during the Tang period, see Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, *Chūgoku bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū* 中國佛教社會史研究, pp. 19–27.

[18] Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 59–69. For Buddhist clergy's exemption from taxes and corvée labor, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, pp. 30–36.

implement his harsh anti-Buddhist policies during the Huichang era (841–846) without incurring strong opposition from the bureaucracy and the general public.

In order to understand Guishan's comments about monastic life described below, we have to keep in mind the state of Buddhism during the first half of the ninth century. On one hand, this was a period of exuberant religiosity in which Buddhism, and especially the Hongzhou School and the rest of the Chan movement, flourished and attracted large following and support. At the same time, it was also a period in which the large Buddhist establishment faced many internal and external problems. The accounts about monastic abuses recounted in biased historical documents—especially the records of the anti-Buddhist memorials presented to the throne by literati-officials at the beginning of the Huichang era, and Wuzong's edicts concerning Buddhism—do paint a one-sided picture of the Buddhist church that exaggerates monastic dereliction and depravity.[19] Even so, such records also reflect some of the realities of ninth century Buddhism, and shed light on problems that strained the relationship between the state and the Buddhist church and its supporters.

*Guishan jingce* is a fascinating text because it combines both of the above aspects. On one hand, the text can be read as a description and trenchant critique of monastic abuses and corruption. At the same time, however, the text also presents inspiring descriptions of monastic ideals and practical instructions about leading purposeful and authentic religious life. Although the text acknowledges many of the problems with the low quality of the Buddhist clergy, its criticisms of monastic corruption are accompanied by prescriptions of corrective measures that would lead to improvement of the quality of the Buddhist clergy. The text assumes that such a change can be enacted if, through direct

[19] For Wuzong's anti-Buddhist edicts, see Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, pp. 126–29.

appeals to individual monks' consciences, they can be persuaded to take their religious vocation seriously and dedicate themselves to a spiritual way of life. The urgent tone of the text suggests that it was probably created either during the early stages of the Huichang persecution, at the time when the monastic community was facing increased criticism from the government, or during the aftermath of the suppression, when Buddhist leaders were reflecting on the reasons for the persecution and were trying to make sure that the problems within the monastic community that contributed to the persecution were quickly corrected.

### Provenance of the Text

*Guishan jingce* is the only text that is directly attributed to Guishan.[20] Other records that are traditionally regarded as representing his teachings are a few short excerpts of transcripts from his sermons, and a larger selection of dialogues, which include exchanges between him and Baizhang, other Chan teachers, and his own disciples (among whom those with Yangshan are especially numerous). These materials can be found both in his record of sayings, which was compiled during the early Ming 明 dynasty (1368–1644) and included in the *Wujia yulu* 五家語錄 collection, and in his

[20] A Japanese translation of *Guishan jingce* can be found in Kajitani Sōnin, "Isan kyōsaku" 潙山警策, in Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 and Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, eds., *Zenka goroku* 禪家語錄, vol. 2, pp. 141–51. Kajitani has another Japanese rendition, also entitled "Isan kyōsaku," in Nishitani Keiji, ed., *Zen no koten: Chūgoku* 禪の古典—中國, pp. 151–74. This text, like an earlier rendition that can be found in Tomitani Tyūkei 富谷龍溪, trans., "Butsuso sankyō kōgi" 佛祖三經講義, in *Sōtō-shū kōgi* 曹洞宗講義, vol. 3, pp. 175–243, do not contain proper Japanese translations of the text. Instead, they both present *yomikudashi* readings of the original, followed by notes and running commentaries (both of which are much more extensive in Tomitani's work). There is also an unpublished English translation in Melvin M. Takemoto, "The Kuei-shan ching-ts'e: Morality in the Hung-chou School of Ch'an" (1983 M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii), pp. 79–90.

hagiographies in various collections belonging to the transmission of the lamp genre.[21] There is no conclusive evidence that Guishan wrote *Guishan jingce*, but there is also nothing to suggest that the traditional attribution is problematic.

Guishan's funeral stele makes no mention of *Guishan jingce*; the same is the case with his hagiographies in *Chuandeng lu*, *Song gaoseng zhuan*, and *Zutang ji*. Such an omission, however, is not very surprising when we consider the literary style in which these texts were written and the purpose of their compilation. Similar oversights can be found in the hagiographies of other Chan monks. For instance, to just give a few examples of this kind from the *Chuandeng lu*, Huangbo's hagiography contains no mention of his *Chuanxin fayao*, even though an abbreviated version of the text is reproduced at the end of the same fascicle where his hagiography appears.[22] Similarly, in *Chuandeng lu* there is no mention of Baizhang's record, even though its existence is attested in Baizhang's stele inscription and in Enchin's (814–891) catalogues,[23] and Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 hagiography does not mention his *Zongmen shigui lun* 宗門十規論 (Discourse on the Ten Principles of the Teaching of Chan), although *Chuandeng lu*

[21] For Guishan's record of sayings, see *Tanzhou Guishan Lingyou chanshi yulu* 潭州潙山靈祐禪師語錄, T 47.577–82, and XZJ 119.425c–30c. *Wujia yulu* was a collection of the records of sayings of the putative "founders" of the so-called five school's of Chan that were recognized from the early Song period onwards. The late compilation of Guishan's records was probably due to the fact that the Guiyang School was a short-lived Tang phenomenon. As the school did not have any active following after the end of the Tang period, during the Northern Song period, when the records of sayings of the famous Tang monks were compiled, there was little impetus to compile a record for Guishan since none of the Chan groups that existed at that time traced back their origin to him.

[22] CTL 9.162–69 (T 51.270b–73a).

[23] CTL 6.113–117 (T 51.249b–51b); for the relevant entries in Enchin's catalogues, see T 55.1095a, T 55.1101a, T 55.1106c, and Yanagida, "The *Li-tai fa-pao chi* and the Ch'an Doctrine of Sudden Awakening," pp. 191–92. For the mention of the compilation of Baizhang's record in his stele inscription, which was compiled soon after his death, see QTW 446.2014a.

was written not very long after Fayan's death, and its compiler Daoyuan, a member of Fayan's lineage, was probably familiar with the text.[24]

It is plausible that the compilers of the Chan histories compiled during the eleventh century did not know about *Guishan jingce*, or if they knew about it, for some reason they deliberately choose to ignore it. The ideological framework that informed the Sung dynasty Chan milieu in which Guishan's hagiographies were composed often precluded the inclusion of biographical information that did not conform to the stereotypical image of an iconoclastic Chan teacher that was being formulated during that period. As there is hardly anything that goes more against that image than the contents of *Guishan jingce*, it is possible that the text was quietly glossed over at the time. With its strong moralistic overtones and conservative stance, during the early Song period *Guishan jingce* was most likely considered to be an unrepresentative example of a literary product stemming from the brush of one of the famous Chan teachers who lived during the golden age of Chan.

The oldest version of *Guishan jingce* was recovered from a cave in Dunhuang during the early part of the last century. The text is part of a manuscript now preserved in Paris as part of the Peliot collection of Dunhuang materials (catalogued as no. 4638). Its title is *Dagui jingce* 大溈警策, and it is a part of larger collection entitled *Yan heshang ji* 彥和尚集 (Reverend Yan's Collection).[25] In this early manuscript, the text of *Dagui jingce* is immediately followed by *Xinxin ming* 信心銘 (Inscriptions on the Faith in Mind), the famous poem traditionally attributed to the putative third Chan patriarch,

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[24] See CTL 24.478–82 (T 51.398b–400a).

[25] For a photographic reproduction of the original manuscript, see *Dunhuang baozang* 敦煌寶藏 134.91–92.

Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606?).[26] The two works are connected together in such a way so as to suggest that they are a single work. *Xinxin ming*'s verses follow the final verse section of *Guishan jingce* without any interruption, and on first sight there is no obvious mark that separates the two texts. The poem's title is altered to *Xinxin xinming* 信心信銘 (by adding the character *xin*, faith), so that its beginning appears as another four-character line in the final verse section of *Guishan jingce*. According to Tanaka Ryōsho, who have done an extensive study of this text, the quality of the hand-written manuscript is not very good. When it is compared with latter versions of the same text, it becomes apparent that it contains numerous errors.[27]

Concerning the dating of the Dunhuang manuscript, a document that is written on the back of the manuscript is dated 936 (third year of the Qingtai 清泰 era of the Latter Tang dynasty).[28] *Yan heshang ji* was copied on the back of this document, presumably

[26] This rendition of *Xinxin ming* is also the oldest extant version of this popular Chan text. For the standard version of the text see T 48.376–77. For more information about the Dunhuang version of *Xinxin ming*, see Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文獻の研究, pp. 297–300, or Idem, "*Genoshoshu* to sareru Tonko hon *Daii kyosaku* ni tsuite" 彥和尙集とされる敦煌本大潙警策について, IBK 22/2 (1974), which is the original article whose later version was included in *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*.

[27] While the other two versions of the text—the QTW and XZJ versions—are quite similar and their differences are minor, according to Tanaka, the Dunhuang version contains a large number of different characters, many of which are probably due to copying errors. Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, p. 337. On the other hand, it is also possible that the editors of the later versions also changed the text at certain places so that it more closely reflected their own views about Chan doctrine. Ibid., pp. 337–38.

[28] Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, pp. 300, 339–40. Tanaka suggests that the manuscript was copied sometime between 936 and 980. This rather long time frame is based on Tanaka's "commonsensical" assumption that Rev. Yan did not use as paper the back of a document that was over fifty years old, which leads him to assume that the manuscript was copied within half a century from the date given on the other document. I question Tanaka's assumption that Rev. Yan might have used as writing paper the back of a document that was a few decades old, and am inclined to assume

because paper was scarce at the time, during the same year or soon afterwards. The identity of Reverend Yan, the compiler of the collection, is not clear. Tanaka has identified four monks who lived during the period when the compilation of *Reverend Yan's Collection* must have occurred (853–980 according to him) who had the character *yan* as part of their name: (1) Chan Teacher Xuanquan Yen of Huaizhou 懷州玄泉彥禪師, a monk in the seventh generation in the Qingyuan 青原 lineage;[29] (2) Ruiyan Shiyan of Taizhou 台州瑞巖師彥, also a monk in the Qingyuan lineage of the same generation;[30] (3) Yaoshan Zhongyan 藥山忠彥, a monk of the Caodong School;[31] and (4) Pengyan 朋彥 of Anguo Zhangshou temple in Suzhou 蘇州, a monk of the Fayan School.[32] In Tanaka's opinion, for various reasons none of the four monks listed above is a suitable candidate as the compiler of *Yan heshang ji*.[33]

In addition, the table of contents of fascicle 11 of *Chuandeng lu* lists a disciple of Guishan whose name is given as Guishan Yan *chanshi* 溈山彥禪師.[34] Tanaka suggests that Guishan Yan *chanshi* is a very likely candidate as the compiler of *Yen heshang ji*, since as a disciple of Guishan he would have been familiar with the original manuscript. Moreover, he would also have been interested to pass his teacher's text on to latter

that the manuscript was produced soon after the document on its back side, that is to say, that is was produced either in 936 or soon afterwards.

[29] For his brief biographical excerpts, see ZTJ 9.212, and CDL 17.335.

[30] For his short biographies, see CDL 17.334–35, and SGSZ 13, T 50786a-b.

[31] Little is know about this monk. For a brief biographical excerpt, see CDL 23.468.

[32] For his short biography, see CDL 26.537.

[33] Tanaka, *Tonkō zenshū bunken no kenkyū*, p. 341.

[34] CTL 11.189 (T 51.281c). CDL only lists the name of this monk among the names of thirty-three disciples of Guishan for whom there were no records.

generations.[35] That is a reasonable assumption, and I am inclined to tentatively agree with the identification of this monk as the compiler of *Yan heshang ji*. Unfortunately, there is no additional information about this monk.

Considering the great distance between Hunan (where Guishan lived) and Dunhuang, and in light of the political developments during the roughly eighty-years period between Guishan's death and the creation of the Dunhuang manuscript, I believe that a copy of *Guishan jingce* must have reached Dunhuang before the fall of the Tang dynasty in 907, and probably even before the start of Huang Chao's 黃巢 (d. 884) rebellion in 878. In view of the warfare and strife that preceded and followed the collapse of the Tang in 907, and the ensuing political division of China during the Five Dynasties period, it seems rather unlikely that the text traveled the long distance between Hunan and Dunhuang during the first three decades of the tenth century. I am thus inclined to assume that Guishan wrote the text sometime around the middle of the ninth century, and that a copy of the original manuscript reached Dunhuang within a few decades from the date of its creation.[36]

The assertion that Guishan was the author of the text is supported by internal evidence. As we will see, the depiction of Chan practice presented in the text's fourth section closely resembles other Hongzhou texts written during approximately the same period, and includes passages that can be found in the extant records of Guishan's sermons. Furthermore, as noted above, the tone of urgency and the self-critical attitude evidenced in the text suggest that its was written around the time of the Huichang era's

[35] Tanaka, "*Genoshoshu* to sareru Tonko hon *Daii kyosaku* ni tsuite," p. 635.

[36] That is also Tanaka's position about the origin of the text. Tanaka, "*Genoshoshu* to sareru Tonko hon *Daii kyosaku* ni tsuite," p. 633.

persecution of Buddhism, when Guishan and his contemporaries were faced with Wuzong's severe purge of the monastic order that it seemed, for a time at least, could lead to a total obliteration of Buddhism in China.

In addition to the Dunhuang manuscript, there are three other versions of *Guishan jingce* in the following collections: *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新 修大藏經, and *Xu zang jing* 續藏經.[37] The *Taishō* version is part of *Zimen jingxun* 緇門警訓, a collection of (mostly) Chan texts, compiled during the Ming dynasty.[38] The *Xu zang jing* version, entitled *Zhu Guishan jingce* 注溈山警策 (Commentary on *Guishan jingce*), also includes the commentary written by Shousui 守遂 (1072–1147), a Song dynasty monk associated with the Caodong School.[39] Shousui's commentary was published in 1139, and is the earliest extant commentary of Guishan's treatise. Subsequently, *Guishan jingce*, together with Shousui's commentary, became a part of *Fozu sanjing chu* 佛祖三經注 (Commentaries on the Three Scriptures of the Buddha and the Patriarchs), a collection of three important texts that are customarily presented as manuals for religious practices to be used in the training of novices. The other two texts included in the collections are the original texts and Shousui's commentaries on two popular scriptures: the *Fo yijiao jing* 佛遺教經 (Scripture concerning the Buddha's Bequeathed Teaching), and the *Sishier zhang jing* 四十二章經 (Scripture in Forty-two Sections). Another noted commentary of *Guishan jingce* is Daopei's 道霈 (1615–1702) *Guishan jingce zhinan* 溈山警策指南, which forms a part

[37] QTW 919.4243b–44b; T 48.1042b–43c, and XZJ 111.142c–48d.

[38] The full title of this version is *Guishan Dayuan changshi jingce* 溈山大圓禪師警策.

[39] For the text of Shousui's stupa inscription (as well as a Japanese translation of it), see Ishii, *Sōdai zenshūshi no kenkyū*, pp. 479–90. Shouisui's commentary is rather brief and not particularly helpful for the study of the original text.

of his *Fozu sanjing zhinan* 佛祖三經指南 (Primer [consisting of] Three Scriptures of the Buddha and the Patriarchs), written during the early Qing 清 dynasty (1644–1912).[40]

## The Contents of *Guishan Jingce*

We do not know whether Guishan wrote *Guishan jingce* primarily for the benefit of the monks of his own monastery, or whether he intended the text to serve as a religious manual directed at a wider monastic audience. On one hand, the tone of the treatise is very direct, even personal, perhaps indicating that its contents were intended for the monks who lived at Guishan's monastery. At the same time, the issues with which the text deals bear general relevance to themes pertaining to monastic life that go beyond the confines of a particular monastery. As a matter of fact, the text deals with important issues that were pertinent to the constitution of the whole monastic order in ninth century China. Probably Guishan was concerned about both the quality of monastic life in his own monastery and the overall state of the Buddhist clergy of his time. The text displays especially strong concern with the moral character and religious commitment of the individual monks (and perhaps also nuns) who constituted the Buddhist monastic order.[41]

Judging from the text's contents, Guishan's stated agenda was to present a set of guidelines for leading a purposeful monastic life, and to remind individuals who already were members of the monastic order, or who were aspiring to become so, about the inspiring religious ideals of Buddhist monasticism. In addition, he also seems to have

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[40] XZJ 59.185c–91c. This text contains the same three text that are found in Shousui compilation. Daopei, a noted Qing monk who is traditionally considered to be a member of the Caodong Chan lineage, is also known as the compiler of *Huayanjing shulun* 華嚴經疏論, a text which includes the eighty fascicles translation of the *Huayan* scripture together with the two famous commentaries written during the Tang dynasty by Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730) and Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839).

[41] While Guishan seem to have directed his comments to monks only, most of what he had to say was equally applicable to Buddhist nuns.

wanted to expose and rebuke the abuses of monastic life that were apparently quite prevalent at the time when the text was written. Such critiques of monastic laxity and vice are a common trope in Buddhist literature, and Guishan followed other well-established models. The text also briefly discusses the objectives and methods of Chan soteriology, and reiterates the importance of morality and monastic discipline in the comprehensive program of Chan practice. Guishan's writing reveals a preoccupation with both the welfare of the whole monastic community, and with the spiritual well being of individual monks.

The text of *Guishan jingce* consists of two parts: a longer prose section which constitutes the main part of the treatise, followed by verses that recapitulate the principal ideas expressed in the main body of the text. This kind of literary format, in which a longer expository part written in prose is followed by a shorter verse summary, is often found in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, and it also appears in the writings of other medieval monks. In Daobei's commentary of *Guishan jingce*, the main body of the text is further sub-divided into five sections.[42] The translation and commentary of the treatise presented below follows this division of the text. The translation contains the whole main body of the text, but leaves out the closing verses. The verse section, which consists of thirty-six four-character lines and constitutes less than 10 percent of the whole text, has been omitted because it does not contain anything new, but instead merely recapitulates some of the points made in the previous sections. The whole text is quite repetitive, and some of the same repetitiveness might also be reflected in my commentary.

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[42]See XZJ 59.185d. Kajitani and Tomitani also follow this division of the text.

***Section 1***. The first section describes the perils and problems associated with physical existence. Guishan begins his treatise by underscoring the compounded nature of the body and the fact that change is the only permanent feature of human life.

> Having received a body because of being bound by karma, one is not yet [able to] escape the troubles associated with physical existence. The body that one received from one's parents is formed by a multitude of causes. Although it is sustained by the four elements, they are constantly out of harmony with each other.[43] The impermanence (*wuchang* 無常, Skt. *anitya*) of old age and illness does not await anyone. What has existed in morning is gone by evening, and the world changes in an instant. [Physical existence] is like spring frost or morning dew, which disappear very suddenly. Like a tree planted on a [river] bank or rattan growing in a well, how can it last for a long time?[44] Thoughts are flashing by quickly within an instant, and with the passing of [each] breath there is a new life.[45] How can you then peacefully and conformably pass [your time] in vain?[46]

The contents of this section are standard reflections on the impermanence of human life that are often found in Buddhist monastic literature. Guishan's views are very much in the mainstream of Buddhist monastic thinking in both India and China. Comments of this kind are routinely used to impress on monks the transitoriness of physical existence and the urgency of the quest for salvation from samsara (*shengsi* 生死), the continuous circle of birth and death. According to this basic Buddhist doctrine, everybody is born in this impermanent world of imperfection as a result of the nature of the various actions performed in previous lives. The only way to break away from the vicious cycle of mundane existence, and the suffering that is its essential feature, is to realize complete

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[43] The four elements are water, air, fire, and earth.

[44] The simile of a tree precariously standing on a riverbank comes from the "Shouming" 壽命 chapter of the *Nirvana Scripture* (reference comes from Tomitani, trans., "Butsuso sankyō kōgi," p. 174). The simile of the rattan growing in a well comes from *Bintoulu wei wang shuofa jing* 賓頭盧爲王說法經, T 32.787a.

[45] An alternative translation reads, "with the last breath a new life begins."

[46] T 48.1042b; XZJ 111.142d–43b.

spiritual liberation. Physical existence itself here is understood as a result of the conflation of innumerable causes and conditions. Physical body's continued existence, like the existence of all other compounded phenomena, is inherently unpredictable and unstable. As human life is an ever-fluctuating process that can end at any moment, and the circumstance of future lives are unpredictable, the right time to start seeking spiritual liberation is the present moment.

***Section 2***. The second section consists of reprimands about various abuses of monastic life. The section begins with a description of the religious ideal of "leaving home" and becoming a monk (*chujia* 出家, Skt. *pravrajita*). The text appropriates the traditional image of a Buddhist monk as someone who has left mundane life in order to devote himself to the quest for spiritual perfection and enlightenment. Following a long-established tradition of writing about monastic life, Guishan observes that monks abandon their family ties, do not pursue official careers, and renounce their families' properties and trades. With their renunciation of conventional social customs and obligations, monks also abrogate their filial duty to continue their families' ancestral lineages.

> [Monks] do not supply their parents with tasty foods, and they steadfastly leave behind the six relations.[47] They cannot pacify their country and govern the state. They promptly give up their family's property and do not continue the family line [by their failure to produce a male heir]. They leave far away their local communities, and they shave their hair and follow their [religious] teachers. Inwardly they strive to conquer their thoughts, while outwardly they spread the virtue of non-contention. Abandoning the defiled world, they endeavor to transcend [the mundane realm of birth and death].[48]

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[47] The six relations are: mother, father, elder brothers (siblings), younger brothers (siblings), wife, and children.

[48] T 48.1042b-c; XZJ 111.143b.

In the above paragraph, though Guishan adheres to the Indian conception of the Buddhist monk as an otherworldly ascetic, at the same time his line of thought is typically Chinese. In the first three sentences he accedes to the view, promoted with vehement insistence by the pro-Confucian detractors of Buddhism, that with their renunciation of social ties (as stipulated by the Vinaya) monks fail to observe their filial duties. As the social relations and the obligations they entailed were widely accepted as the basis of traditional Chinese morality, monks' renunciation was continuously at odds with the mores and social ethos of most Chinese. The origins of this criticism of Buddhist monasticism went all the way back to the early introduction of Buddhism in China. Even though by the ninth century Buddhism was by-and-large fully domesticated by the Chinese and was widely accepted and practiced by people from all strata of society, this kind of sense of conflict between monastic values and Confucian-inspired views about social relationships and obligation was still very much alive. The conflict was probably also felt by many of the monks themselves.

The most common Buddhist response to this kind of criticism, also adopted by the present text, was to argue that although monks eschewed the traditional duties towards their family and their country, their rejection of social conventions was justified by the lofty religious purpose of their renunciation. As Buddhist monks turned their backs on customary social ties and values, at the same time they formally accepted a binding commitment to lead authentic religious lives that brought spiritual benefits to the whole of society, including their own immediate family.

Like most of his Chinese contemporaries, Guishan was aware that monks' ability to leave secular life and practice their religion was a "privilege" that, at least as far as the prevalent sociopolitical ideology was concerned, was granted by the ruler and the wider

society, rather than being an undeniable right to which monks were automatically entitled. Monastic communities did not exist completely outside of medieval Chinese society. Quite to the contrary, they were an integral part of Tang's social, economic, and to a lesser extent political life. Monastic life was a viable vocation for those with spiritual aspirations (as well as for many who lacked them) only because the government and large part of the general public acceded to the continuous presence of Buddhism, and offered their support to the Buddhist monastic order. In the following paragraph, Guishan reminds his monastic audience of monks' indebtedness to others, and initiates his criticism of those monks who abused the privileges bestowed on them by their failure to take their religious vocation seriously.

> How can you declare "I am a monk" (*biqiu* 比丘, Skt. *bhikṣu*) as soon as you receive the monastic precepts? The lay donors (*tanyue* 檀越, Skt. *dānapati*) provide the daily necessities and monastery's permanent property (*changzhu* 常住). Without understanding or properly considering where they come from, you [mistakenly] assume they are supplied in a natural way as a matter of fact. Having finished your meal, you gather in groups and noisily engage in rambling talk about worldly things. However, as you experience ephemeral pleasures, you do not know that pleasure is the cause of suffering. For a very long time you have been following defilements, and have not yet tried to reflect inwardly. Time is passing in vain, months and years are wasted to no avail. You are receiving abundant offerings and sumptuous donations. In this way years pass by, without you intending to abandon [this way of life]. The [defilements] you accumulate grow more and more, as you maintain the illusory body.[49] The Guide (i.e. the Buddha) issued an injunction in which he admonished and encouraged the *bhikṣus* to progress along the way, be strict with their bodies, and [not be too concerned about] not having enough of the three requisites [of robes, food, and shelter]. Here, a lot of people are addicted to flavors without any repose. As days and months pass by, like the sound of the passing wind you will became white-haired [without noticing it]. Students of the younger generation who have not yet heard about the main principles [or religious life] should widely question those who

[49] The first part of the sentence can also be interpreted to mean "the [material possessions] you accumulate grow more and more."

already know about them. They mistakenly assume that monks are those who are concerned with seeking robes and food.[50]

In societies where Buddhist institutions were deeply entrenched and widely supported by the general public, as it was the case in Tang China, by simply entering the monastic order an individual received a certain level of economic support. That support usually removed the uncertainties of daily survival that characterized the existence of the common people, and enabled the monks to lead lives in which they were not constantly disturbed by the daily struggle for economic survival. Ideally, the economic support that was extended to the monastic community enabled the monks to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of spiritual endeavors. IN addition, financial support was also provided as a reward for the religious services that the monasteries performed for their lay sponsors. Nonetheless, that was a system that could easily be abused and exploited for personal advantage. Here the text depicts those individuals who took advantage of the system to lead easy and indolent lives.

Guishan's recounting of the behavior of such pseudo-monks, who though wearing robes and living in monasteries lacked proper religious motivation, echoes descriptions of monastic corruption found in other sources critical of the monastic order and the Buddhist religion. The present text depicts corrupt monks as individuals who have entered the monastic order so that they can lead comfortable and easy lives, without having any religious aspirations. Instead of practicing renunciation and following the Buddha's injunctions about physical restrain and frugality, such persons led unproductive lives and were mainly interested in accumulating almsgivers' offerings. Criticizing them for being

[50] T 48.1042c; XZJ 111.143–44a.

lazy and ignorant, Guishan suggest to his audience that such people merely wasted their lives in vain and were hopelessly lost in their defilements.

The Buddhist tradition usually defined the exemplary monk as an otherworldly ascetic who was dedicated to religious cultivation, regardless of the level of material support he receives in order to sustain his physical life. In the above paragraph, Guishan reminds his audience of that ideal, but at the same time he also acknowledges that all monks did not share this kind of religious commitment. For some corrupt individuals, assuming monastic status served primarily as a means of gaining material benefits while at the same time avoiding the toil of lay life. In the Buddhist scheme of things, as Guishan points out, such an attitude was considered to be delusory and shortsighted. It was not only that for the sake of ephemeral material pleasures such people strayed away from their religious vocation and missed the opportunity to develop spiritually; they also planted the seeds of bad karma that would lead to unfortunate results in the future.

Guishan, like most of his contemporaries, assumed that monastic identity and religious practice were intimately related to the observance of the monastic precepts. Echoing the sentiments of traditional Buddhist monasticism, the text describes the role of monastic discipline in the following manner:

> The Buddha first established the Vinaya (*lü* 律), and began to enlighten [his disciples]. The monastic regulations and the rules of dignified deportment are pure like ice and snow. By observing the precepts and ceasing to do transgressions [monks] control their initial [spiritual] resolve. The detailed regulations correct all that is crude and unwholesome. When someone has not yet gone to the teaching site of the Vinaya (*pini faxi* 毘尼法席),[51] how can he evaluate the superior vehicle of the definitive meaning (*liaoyi shangsheng* 了義上乘). It is such a pity

[51] Meaning he has not yet learned the Vinaya and put it into practice.

> when a whole lifetime is passed in vain, and regretting afterwards about missed opportunities will be of little avail.[52]

Here, the Vinaya, the collection of monastic rules traditionally attributed to the Buddha, is presented as the basis of authentic religious life. Following long-established traditions of Buddhist monasticism, the text affirms that observance of the monastic precepts leads to a lifestyle that is conducive to the development and maintenance of proper religious aspiration. Furthermore, leading an ethical life as defined by the Vinaya is also described as an essential condition for realizing the higher doctrines of Buddhism, including the ultimate teaching of the "superior vehicle," the highest doctrine of Buddhism.

The image of a Buddhist monk presupposed in the text is that of an ascetic who has left society and has dedicated himself to a disciplined monastic life in which the main priority were the study and practice of the Buddhist teachings. This ideal was widely recognized by Tang society. At the time when the text was composed there were broadly defined standards of what constituted an acceptable monastic behavior, which were widely known and accepted by both the monastic order and the general public. At the same time, however, the ideal of the monk as an otherworldly ascetic was not followed by a substantial part of the monastic order. Of course, there are records of numerous sincere monks who took their vocation seriously and led lives dedicated to spiritual practice. But, it seems quite unlikely that such was the case with most of the monks. As was noted above, the destitute lives of most of China's population and the lack of opportunities for social advancement, coupled with the privileged status of the Buddhist clergy, caused many to enter the monastic order for reasons that had little (or nothing) to do with

[52] T 48.1042c; XZJ 111.144a-b.

religious piety and practice. Guishan's comments and criticism of the lack of proper spiritual attitude were evidently directed towards such individuals.

During the Tang period, in order to become a monk theoretically one had to receive proper ordination according to the Vinaya. These ordinations were sanctioned and controlled by the state, which claimed the right to decide who can join the monastic order. In addition to the formal requirement of receiving ordination, in theory at least, monks were also expected to possess proper spiritual motivation and lead religious lives governed by monastic rules and customs. Nonetheless, the actual system that regulated new members entry into the Buddhist clergy was evidently not very effective in making sure that only people with religious motivation could enter the order. Many people received ordination, or simply bought ordination certificates, without having strong religious motivation, and without being willing to submit themselves to the restrictions that monastic life imposed. Many of the abuses perpetuated by the Buddhist clergy were recorded by officials with pro-Confucian predilections, some of whom were always eager to point out the shortcomings of the "foreign religion." The following passage from a decree issued in 731 is typical of some of these criticisms: "[Monks] benefit from the privileges of their class and thus shielded enrich themselves. It is to no avail that they are exempted from taxes and covrée services. They pile up deception. They are roaming laymen who go about the business of magicians, straining their discourse and thinking."[53] Nonetheless, even if we allow for some exaggeration due to political consideration and their authors' strong personal biases, many of the criticisms found in historical records most likely had some foundation in reality.

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[53] *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 159.17a; translation adapted from Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, p. 198.

Though criticism of monastic corruption came mostly from literati/officials and historians with anti-Buddhist inclinations, similar criticism can sometimes be found in the writings of Buddhist authors. In addition to the present text, other examples of critiques of corrupt Buddhist clergy can be found in some of the poems written by the famous eight century Buddhist recluse and poet Hanshan 寒山 (d.u.). In one of his poems, Hanshan mocks monastic greed and hypocrisy, while in another poem he contrast true virtuous monks with religious impostors who enter the order without any religious aspirations, and whose greed, ignorance, and evil acts will, according to him, surely lead to rebirth in hell.[54]

In the next paragraph, the text continues its description of those monks who have strayed from the proper pursuit of their religious vocation.

> Without having yet grasped the meaning of the teachings [of Buddhism], they cannot awaken to the recondite way. As they become old and accumulate monastic seniority, they become pretentious despite their poor abilities. Unwilling to draw near and rely on excellent [spiritual] mentors (lit. "friends"), such persons know of nothing else but being rude and conceited. Without being versed in the Dharma and the Vinaya, they have no inhibitions whatsoever. Sometimes, with loud voices they engage in [useless] talk without any restrains. They do not respect their seniors, peers, or juniors. They are not different from a gathering of brāhmins. [During meals] they make noise with their alms bowls, and they rise up first as soon as they have finished eating. Leaving in disorder or returning in an inappropriate manner, their appearance is not at all that of monks. Rising from their seats in an agitated manner, they disturb other people's minds.[55]

As corrupt monks have failed to learn the Buddhist teachings and acquire proper religious values during their young years, the text tells us, they became even worse as they got old. With the traditional Chinese respect for old age and the monastic rules concerning

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[54] Iritani Sensuke 入矢仙介 and Matsumura Takashi 松村昂, trans., *Kanzan shi* 寒山詩, pp. 370–75. See also Robert G. Henricks, trans., *The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of* Cold Mountain, pp. 372–73.

seniority, such elderly monks assumed positions of seniority in the monastic system, and thus they automatically came to command greater respect even though they lacked proper spiritual qualities worthy of their higher status. This kind of situation made them less malleable to beneficial influences, and they become arrogant and hopelessly set in their undisciplined ways. The text describes such monks as individuals who, despite their religious garbs, had the appearance of lay people. Without any self-discipline and sense of appropriate demeanor, they spent their time gossiping with loud voices, did not show the appropriate respect towards their elders as was demanded by monastic mores and regulations, and were arrogant towards their juniors. As they behaved in ways that were contrary to proper monastic decorum, such pseudo-monks created discord and problems for the whole monastic community.

> As [such corrupt monks] do not observe the small regulations and the minor rules of deportment, they cannot guide the new generation [or monks, as a result of which] new students have no one to emulate [as a model of proper behavior]. When others reprimand them, they say "I am a mountain monk." As they are unfamiliar with the sustained practice of Buddhism, constantly their disposition and actions are unbecoming and crude. When viewed in this way, should beginners become lazy and greedy persons, as time slowly slips by they will eventually become abominable persons. Unaware, they will eventually start staggering and become old and useless, and when they encounter various circumstances they [will not know what to do], like someone facing a wall. When asked [about the teachings of Buddhism] by younger students, they have no words of guidance. Even when they have something to say, their words do not accord with the scriptures. Sometimes, when younger monks speak lightly of them, they reprimand them for not having good manners. They become angry and rancorous, and vent their anger on others.[56]

If monks did not study and practice the teachings of Buddhism themselves, when they became senior and assumed the role of teachers, they could not pass the teachings on to

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[55] T 48.1042c; XZJ 111.144b-c.

[56] T 48.1042c; XZJ 111.144c-d.

the younger generations. Even when such uneducated and ignorant elderly monks tried to teach novices, their words did not accord with the scriptures. It is important to note that the above paragraph indicates that for Guishan the scriptures were the main sources of religious authority, and the religious instructions given by individual monks were expected to accord with them. Such a view places Guishan right in the center of the mainstream of Tang Buddhism.

The learning of monastic mores and practices was a gradual process in which younger monks learned primarily by observing the examples and absorbing the instructions of their seniors. When senior monks were ignorant about the doctrines and practices of Buddhism, that obviously created problems for the younger generations of monks who had nobody to learn from, and who lacked actual models of proper monastic behavior to follow. Moreover, as the monastic community saw itself as being responsible for safeguarding the teachings of Buddhism, education of the younger generation of monks was a high priority. Thus, the failure to learn the teachings of Buddhism was not only a personal downfall of those monks who did not take their spiritual vocation seriously, but it was also a dereliction of their duty to help ensure the transmission of Buddhism to the later generations. The consequences of this kind of remiss behavior were perceived to be very serious, as can be seen from the subsequent paragraph.

> One morning they will wake up laying sick in their beds, bothered and constrained by a multitude of ailments. From dawn till night they will keep on thinking, while in their minds there will be confusion and fear. The road ahead will be unclear, and they will not know where they are going. Even if at that point for the first time they become aware and remorseful of their faults, it will be of no avail, [being already too late,] like digging a well when one becomes thirsty. They might have self-regret for not having practiced earlier, and for having many faults and demerits at their old age. At the point of departure, having squandered [their whole life], they will tremble with fear and will be filled with panic. As someone crosses away from the living, like a sparrow flying away, the consciousness

> follows his karma. As when a person incurs debts, he will first come under pressure to pay back those who are powerful. In the same way, though there are many kinds of mental states in the mind, one inclines to descend into [a specific rebirth according to] the predominant part [of the defiled mind].[57] The murderous demon of impermanence does not stop for an instant. Life cannot be extended, and time waits for no one. Nobody among the human beings and the gods living in the three realms of existence can escape this kind of destiny.[58] In this manner, one [is reborn and] receives a [new] body for untold eons.[59]

Reflecting traditional Buddhist beliefs about death, karma, and rebirth, in a rather conventional manner the text describes the unfortunate circumstances that surround the end of a life that has been wasted in unworthy pursuits. According to the Buddhist teaching of the law of karma, a life of improper behavior and hypocrisy ended in pain and fear. At the time of death, a corrupt monk presumably faced the unknown prospect of his future destiny with a body filled with physical pain and a confused mind overwhelmed with fear. Though such a person might have regrets for missing earlier opportunities to prepare for his death, at that point it was too late to change anything. Buddhists believed that at the moment of death the consciousness departed from the body, and embarked on its journey in one of the three realms of existence, where the form and circumstance of the future life followed the dictates of individual's karma. Each person thus continued to be reborn unless he or she realized Buddhahood, and individual's future life was understood to be dependent on the kind of life he or she had lead in the previous lifetimes.

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[57] The translation is tentative. The original text literary reads "they have a tendency to sink into the heavy part."

[58] The three realms of existence (also referred to as the "three worlds") are the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm. According to Buddhist beliefs, everyone is reborn in one of the three reams in circumstances that are dictated by his or her previous karma.

[59] T 48.1042c; XZJ 111.144d–45b.

According to this doctrine, an evil person who had led an immoral life while pretending to be a monk obviously could not expect to be reborn amidst happy and favorable circumstances. In this paragraph Guishan merely reiterates popular beliefs about death and rebirth. He ostensibly uses the popular teachings about the workings of the law of karma in the same way they have often been used in Buddhist literature: to urge correction of immoral or improper behavior by restating the traditional Buddhist views about the dire consequences of unwholesome acts.

> Alas, what is to be done, it painfully hurts the heart! How can one stop words—[we should] exhort each other! It is regrettable that we were born together in the period of the semblance teaching, far removed from the time when the Sage (i.e. the Buddha) left this world. The Buddhist teachings (*fofa* 佛法) are unfamiliar and many people are negligent. Here I roughly present my humble opinions in order to instruct future [generations]. If one does not do away with conceit, it would really be difficult to escape the wheel [of birth and death].[60]

The mention of the semblance teaching in the above paragraph reflects the influence of the belief known as the three periods (*sanqi* 三期) of the Buddhist teaching, which was popular among the Buddhist followers throughout the Tang period. According to this theory, in the course of its history the Buddhist religion undergoes a continuous process of change, and as time passes its spiritual vigor and its soteriological efficacy are gradually eroded and diminished. The whole process of the progressive decay of Buddhism is divided into three stages— the period of the correct teaching (*zhengfa* 正法), the period of the semblance teaching (*xingfa* 像法), and the final period of the teaching (*mofa* 末法)—in which each subsequent stage represents a period of greater decline and corruption than the previous one.

[60] T 48.1043a; XZJ 111.145b-c.

There were various views about the length of each period of the decline of Buddhism. According to some popular accounts, by the beginning of the Tang Buddhism had supposedly already passed its prime, having left the period of the correct teaching, when Buddhist teachings were properly practiced and ultimate liberation was realized by many disciples of the Buddha, and entered the second period of the semblance teaching. During this period, as stated in the above paragraph, Buddhism was presumed to be in a state of decline as its teachings were not widely understood and the majority of the monks were neglecting their spiritual practice. The period of the semblance teaching was conceived of as an intermediate stage in the natural course of the gradual decline of Buddhism. It was followed by the final period of the teaching, a period of moral degradation and pervasive corruption, which ended with the eventual obliteration of any trace of the Buddhist religion in the world.

Since the theory of the three periods of the teaching does not figure prominently in Chan Buddhism—indeed, its literal interpretation is directly contravened in some Chan texts—we can surmise that its mention here primarily serves as a conventional rhetorical device, rather that as evidence of a firmly-held belief in the historical decline of Buddhism adhered to by Guishan and other Chan teachers who were active during the Tang. Laments about the poor present state of Buddhist practitioners and institutions of this kind are often found in Chan and other Buddhist writings. Such criticisms of the shortcomings of certain aspects of the present state of Buddhism, made for the purpose of prescribing certain religious attitudes or practices, are often enlivened by contrasting the imperfect present with an idealized golden past.[61]

[61] In other contexts the imperfection of the present state of affairs is contrasted with the perfection achieved by the monks of some legendary past period in order to urge return to the values that

***Section 3***. The third section explains the correct reasons for "leaving home" and becoming a monk. The monastic ideal is described in the following manner:

> Those who have left home (i.e. monks), having set off towards the transcendental direction, differ from lay people in both their mind and their external appearance. They cause the seed of sanctity (i.e. the seed of Buddhahood) to continue to flourish, and they make Māra's armies tremble with fear.[62] They repay the four kinds of benevolence, and save those living in the three worlds.[63] If you are not like that, then you falsely pretend to be a member of the monastic order.[64]

Monks differed from ordinary people in their external appearance, in the values they espoused, and in the goals to which they dedicated their lives. Here, in an indirect manner, the text again briefly responds to the criticism that monks are not filial in a conventional sense. It makes the standard Buddhist argument that through their spiritual practice and realization monks repaid the depth of gratitude they owed to their parents, to their ruler, to the people who supported them, and of course to the Buddha. By embodying and actively propagating the teachings of Buddhism, monks also ensured the continued existence of Buddhism in the world. Moreover, through their direct preaching and indirect personal example, monks aided the spiritual salvation of their fellow human beings.

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supposedly characterized that past. In the case of the belief about the semblance teaching, however, such a return is impossible. According to the three periods theory, the sequence of the three periods is irreversible, and there is no way that the effects of the progressive historical transformation on Buddhism can be turned back in time.

[62] Māra is the Buddhist personification of evil. He is usually depicted as trying to interrupt or prevent the spiritual progress of Buddhist practitioners.

[63] The four kinds of benevolence are directed towards: the Buddha, the ruler of the country, one's parents, and one's donors. Sometimes they are also defined as benevolence towards: one's parents, all living beings, the rules of the country, and the three treasures of Buddhism (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha).

[64] T 48.1043a; XZJ 111.145c.

In this manner, genuine monkhood was defined in terms of a faithful commitment to a religious way of life aimed at spiritual enlightenment that was dedicated to the benefit of all people (all creatures, indeed). Such formulation was in accord with the altruistic and all-inclusive spirit of Mahayana Buddhism. Those who failed to, or did not even try to live up to these lofty aspirations, were labeled fraudulent monastics, and were criticized as persons who merely pretended to be monks in order to obtain mundane benefits. Guishan further describes some of those deceitful monks in the following manner:

> Their words and actions are absurd and coarse, and they falsely receive alms from the faithful. Their present actions do not differ at all from those of the past (i.e. before becoming monks). As they absent-mindedly pass their whole lifetime [without achieving anything], what is there that they can rely on? Furthermore, there are some who have the impressive appearance of monks and handsome countenances. [That is the case because] they have all already planted wholesome roots in previous lives, as a result of which they receive such fortuitous recompense. That being so, they are like someone who only stands tidily with his hands folded, unconcerned about the value of time. Without being diligent in their undertaking [of religious life], such people will not be able to receive any further merits or [spiritual] rewards. How can they pass their whole life in vain? There will be no one at all to help them with their future karma.[65]

Here the text repeats again that although fraudulent monks wore monastic robes and lived in religious establishments, their behavior was not different from the time when they were lay people. Furthermore, the text notes that some people were blessed with favorable physical and mental endowments and had the good fortune of being able to become monks. All of these are described as being results of virtuous actions those individuals performed in their previous lives. However, if such a favorable predicament were to become a cause of complacency, so that they become negligent with their practice and

[65] T 48.1043a; XZJ 111.145d.

failed to exert themselves, then such monks only planted the seeds for their future misfortune. Their failure to cultivate virtue and practice the Buddhist teachings in the present life are described as causes that will eventually lead them to unfavorable future existence, because, as the text keeps on repeating, the law of karma is always true, and there is no one that can take care of another person's bad karma.

> Having left your relatives, as with determined [spiritual] resolve you put on the monastic robes,[66] where are your thoughts and aspirations directed? Think about it from dawn until night—how can you afford to pass your time procrastinating? A person of great ability who has set his mind on the Buddha's teachings becomes an exemplar to the latecomers [to religious life]. [But even if] you are always like that, you will still not be able to [fully] accord [with the truth]. When speaking, your words should be in accord with the scriptures. In conversation, you should depend on the examination and study of the records of the ancient exemplars. Your appearance and conduct should be outstanding, and your spirit should be lofty and peaceful.[67]

Here a monk is described as someone who, having left secular life, is solely concerned with the quest for enlightenment and spiritual perfection. Though such a monk might himself become a model of authentic religiosity, his basic identity is still very much defined by the broader religious tradition. The basic criterion of proper spiritual understanding, the text repeats once more, were the Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore, individual behavior had to be modeled on the actions and sayings of ancient exemplars of Buddhist perfection, as they were recorded in Buddhist literature. Guishan's statements are those of a person who had profound respect for tradition, and who defined the monastic vocation in conventional terms. It is easy to imagine him as someone who would have had nothing to do with the Chan iconoclast who became a familiar religious figure during later times, and who is routinely depicted in contemporary Chan/Zen

[66] Lit. "puts on black," the color of the robes Chan monks wore at that time.

[67] T 48.1043a; XZJ 111.146a.

literature as someone who flaunts tradition and rejects religious authority. The central role of the monastic tradition in individual monk's spiritual development is further described in the following paragraph.

> A journey to a distant place should be undertaken with the help of good friends, and one needs to purify one's ears and eyes again and again. When journeying and when stopping, one must select [suitable] companions, always listening to [the teachings] he has not heard before. Therefore, it has been said, "I was born by my mother and father, but I was perfected by my [spiritual] friends."[68] Drawing close to and associating with the virtuous is like walking in mist or dew—though the clothes do not become wet, there is always dampness. Becoming influenced by those who are evil leads to the increase of evil knowledge and views. Performing evil from morning to night, one directly meets retribution, and after death one drowns and perishes [and becomes reborn in the evil realms]. Once the human body is lost, it [might be] impossible to regain it for a myriad eons. Sincere words are not pleasing to the ear, but how can you fail to inscribe them in your hearts. Then you can cleanse your mind [of defilements] and cultivate your virtue, retire into obscurity and conceal your name, and collect your spirit, so that there is an end to all [mental] noise.[69]

In the final part of this section, Guishan stresses the importance of spiritual mentors (or friends, usually referred to as *shan zhihshi* 善知識, Skt. *kalyāna-mitra*).[70] The term spiritual mentors that appears in the text is usually used to refer to monks' spiritual teachers, but the same term can also refer to other senior monks who through their religious instructions and personal examples provide guidance along the path to spiritual

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[68] The quotation is based on a passage from the biography of Guan Zhong 管仲 in *Shiji* 史記 62.2136. Guan Zhong and Yan Ying 晏嬰, whose biographies form fascicle 62 of *Shiji*, were the two famous ministers of the state of Ji 齊 during the Warning States period (c. 403–221 BC). The same quote also appears in Yaoshan's biography in ZTJ 4.106, where it is attributed to Baizhang.

[69] T 48.1043a; XZJ 111.146a-c.

[70] The importance of spiritual mentors is strongly stressed in the Pali canon. See the *Anguttara Nikaya* (Pali Text Society edition), vol. 1, pp. 8, 15, and vol. 2, p. 9. In China, one of the best-known description of the role of spiritual mentors is the story of the pilgrimage of the young Sudhana, told in the last chapter of the *Huayan Scripture*, "Ru fajie pin" 入法界品, T 9.676a–788b, and T 10.319a–444c.

perfection. In a manner that echoes many similar passages in both the Āgamas and the Mahayana scriptures, Guishan recommends that monks should follow and associate with spiritual mentors, and be willing to learn constantly from them. Similarly, they are advised to avoid evil people, lest they be influenced by them and be led astray from the religious path. Seemingly concerned lest the audience forgets, the text also once more offers reminders about the workings of the law of karma, and about the unfortunate immediate and deferred woeful consequences of any unwholesome course of action.

***Section 4***. The first three sections of the text did not contain anything that was distinctly characteristic of the Hongzhou School's (or for that matter of the whole Chan School's) conception of religious doctrine and practice. The monastic ideal described by Guishan, and his criticisms of those who stray from it, deeply resonate with much of the voluminous body of Indian and Chinese Buddhist literature on morality and monastic life. So far, Guishan's views were quite conventional, even commonplace; they were in agreement with mainstream orthodox ideas about Buddhist monasticism. In fact, much of what the text said is to a large degree in accord with the description of the monastic ideal found in the earliest, pre-Mahayana scriptures, like those that comprise the Pali canon of the Theravada School.

It is only in the fourth section, in his discussion of religious practice and realization, that Guishan for the first time introduces ideas and concepts that are characteristic of the Chan School. In the following paragraphs, he presents a brief exposition of Chan practice as a religious path that leads to a direct realization of reality, and points to the close relationship between Chan soteriology and the monastic rules and mores described in the previous sections.

If you want to practice Chan and study the Way, then you should suddenly go beyond the expedient teachings. You should harmonize your mind with the arcane path [that leads to spiritual liberation], explore the sublime wonders,[71] make final resolution of the recondite [meaning], and awaken to the source of truth. You should also extensively ask for instructions from those who have foresight, and should get close to virtuous friends. The sublime wonder of this teaching (*zong* 宗) is difficult to grasp—one must pay attention very carefully. If someone can suddenly awaken to the correct cause, then that is the stage of leaving defilement behind; he then shatters the three worlds and twenty-five forms of existence.[72] Such a person knows that all phenomena, internal and external, are not real—arising from mind's transformations, they are all provisional designations. There is no need to anchor the mind anywhere. When feelings merely do not attach to things, then how can things hinder anyone? Let the nature of other things flow freely, without [interfering by] trying to break apart or extend anything. The sounds that one hears and the forms that one sees are all ordinary; whether being here or there, one freely responds to circumstances without any fault.[73]

The above paragraph presents a description of the Chan path that is in accord with the typical formulations found in other texts that contain the teachings of the Hongzhou School. The attitudes towards religious practice and awakening expressed here are reminiscent of Guishan's brief sermons from his biography in *Chuandeng lu*,[74] and also resonate with the sermons found in the records of Mazu, Baizhang, and Huangbo. Most of the terms that are used in the first two sentences to describe Chan practice and realization—such as "practice Chan" (*canchan* 參禪), "study the Way" (*xuedao* 學道), "harmonize the mind" (*xinqi* 心契), "awaken to the source of truth"(*wu zhenyuan* 悟眞源)—can be found in the extant sermons of Mazu and his disciples. Moreover, the term

[71] The three Japanese versions of the text read *jingyao* 精要 (essentials) instead of *jingmiao* 精妙 (sublime wonders). See Kajitani's renderings in *Zen no koten*, p. 166, and *Zenka goroku*, p. 147, and Tomitani, trans., "Butsuso sankyō kōgi," p. 214.

[72] The twenty-five forms of existence represent the totality of all forms of existence in the three realms, from the deepest hells to the highest heavens.

[73] T 48.1043a-b; XZJ 111.146c–47a.

[74] See CTL 9.150 (T 51.264c18–65a3).

"sudden awakening" (*dunwu* 頓悟), which appears in the third sentence, was one of the watchwords of the whole Chan movements. The same expression appears in the records of Hongzhou monks (albeit not nearly as often as most works on Chan suggest), including a record of conversation between Guishan and an anonymous monk.[75] Similarly, the other ideas expressed in the above paragraph—such as the unreal and mind-created nature of phenomena, and the need to keep the mind unattached and to prevent it from interfering with the natural flow of things—are familiar themes from the records of the Hongzhou School.

It is even more important to note that parts of the above paragraph are virtually the same as parts of Guishan's sermon recorded in his biography in *Chuandeng lu*. The expression "feelings do not attach to things" (*jing bufu wu* 情不附物) appears with the exactly same wording both in the present text and in Guishan's sermon in *Chuandeng lu*. In addition, the sentence "The sounds that one hears and the forms that one sees are all ordinary" is very similar to the following sentence from Guishan's sermon in *Chuandeng lu*: "What one sees and hears at any time is ordinary."[76] In a manner that is characteristic of Hongzhou School's records, the text describes the teachings of Chan as the apex of Buddhist religiosity. Chan is depicted as a path that leads to sudden awakening through which one transcends the realm of ignorance and realizes the true nature of reality.

> When someone is acting in this manner, then he does not put on the monastic robe in vain. Furthermore, such a person repays the four kinds of benevolence, and liberates those living in the three worlds. If lifetime after lifetime he can continue

[75] See CDL 9.150. For an example of Mazu's use of the term, see MY, XZJ 119.406b. The term also appears in the title of Dazhu Huihai's *Dunwu rudao yaomen lun*. For Dazhu's explanations of the term in this treatise, see Hirano Sōjō 平野宗淨, trans., *Tongo yōmon* 頓悟要門, pp. 7, 60, 91–92. See also the discussion of Chan subitism in Chapter Eight.

[76] CTL 9.150.

> [practicing] without giving up, it is definitely plausible to expect that he will reach the stage of Buddhahood. As a guest who keeps on coming and going in the three realms, appearing and disappearing he serves as a model for others. This one teaching is most sublime and most profound. Just discern the affirmation of your own mind, are you will certainly not be deceived.[77]

In the above paragraph, the text mostly repeats some of the points that were made in the previous sections, and relates them to the realization of the soteriological goal of Chan. A monk who is able to truly practice and realize the Chan path is a worthy exemplar of authentic religiosity who repays his depth of gratitude, is able to offer spiritual assistance to others, and can serve as a model of religious excellence. Yet, despite the subitist rhetoric eloquently deployed in the previous paragraph, here Guishan also accedes that although the goal of Buddhahood can certainly be realized if one practices diligently, the realization of such ultimate spiritual perfection is a difficult goal that might take more then one lifetime to achieve. For him sudden awakening to the truth is only a beginning of a long and essentially gradual process of spiritual practices that is informed by the initial insight, which finally culminates in the realization of Buddhahood. This paradigm of the Buddhist path is similar to the well-known theory of sudden enlightenment followed by gradual cultivation propounded by Zongmi, who attributed it to Shenhui.[78] The same idea is also expressed in Guishan's record, where he states that a person who had experienced sudden awakening still needs to continue his spiritual cultivation so that he can gradually remove ingrained karmic tendencies and habitual mental patterns that have kept him bound to mundane existence.[79]

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[77] T 48.1043b; XZJ 111.146c–47b.

[78] See Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, pp. 192–96.

[79] This idea is discussed in the following passage from Guishan's record:

In the same realistic vein, and unlike other Chan texts whose lofty subitist discourse often seems to be an ideational stance that is somewhat dissociated from actual everyday religious behavior and experience, Guishan shows great sensitivity to the realities of religious life. He is not only concerned with presenting an idealized vision of a spiritual path suitable for few religious virtuosi, who in Chan literature are usually referred to as those of "highest abilities," for whom the sole emphasis is on a sudden and immediate insight into the nature of reality. Guishan also shows concern for those who do not belong to this exalted category, the actual monks he interacted with, many of whom according to his own account had trouble observing even the most basic injunctions of religious life.

Guishan's account of monastic practice, and his description of the place of Chan practice in it, stands in sharp contrast to the numerous popular stories about sudden and spontaneous awakenings that fill Chan literature. These stories often depict awakening as being occasioned by such seemingly ordinary events as hearing a sound or seeing a tree blossom, and imply that its realization was an almost effortless and spontaneous experience. Virtually all such Chan stories preclude discussion (and in many cases even intimation) about the necessity of actual religious practice as a prelude to religious realization. They seem to indicate that Chan awakening was an easily attainable

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There was a monk who asked the Master (i.e. Guishan), "Does a person who has had sudden awakening still need to continue with cultivation?" The Master said, "If one has true awakening and attains to the fundamental, then at that time that person knows for himself that cultivation and non-cultivation are just dualistic opposites. Like now, though the initial inspiration is dependent on conditions, if within a single thought one awakens to one's own reality, there are still certain habitual tendencies that have accumulated over numberless *kalpas* which cannot be purified in a single instant. That person should certainly be taught how to gradually remove the karmic tendencies and mental habits: this is cultivation. There is no other method of cultivation that need to be taught to that person."

experience that was realized by many monks. Guishan's text presents a much more realistic picture of religious life. It dwells less on lofty but mostly impractical rhetorical flourishes about the splendor of Chan awakening realized by a few spiritual heroes, and is instead more concerned with the immediate religious needs of ordinary monks.

As was indicated above, Guishan's text was addressed to monks, presumably the monks of his own monastery, who (like most monks at any time and place) could hardly keep the monastic precepts and sustain their religious aspirations. For them the sudden awakening of Chan might have been an admirable, and probably even an inspiring religious ideal that did motivate and animate their spiritual practice. But at the same time, despite the Chan School's efforts to demystify and bring down to earth the experience of Buddhist enlightenment, for most monks (not to mention lay people) that was still a remote religious ideal that did not always tally with their actual everyday experiences. Moreover, even in its Chan idiom, enlightenment was still an abstract ideal that offered little guidance about actual daily conduct and spiritual practice. For all those monks that did not belong to the highest-ranking category of spiritual virtuosi who could enact the sudden leap into the recondite realm of enlightenment (that is to say, for most monks), the text offers the following advice:

> In the case of those of average abilities, who have not been able suddenly to go beyond [the expedient teachings], they should pay attention to the doctrinal teachings (*jiaofa* 教法). They should review and rummage in the palm leaves of the scriptures, and thoroughly inquire into their principles. [Furthermore, they should also] hand them down to others from mouth to mouth, and should expound and make them known, thus guiding the younger generations and repaying the Buddha's benevolence. They should, moreover, not waste their time in vain, but they must in this manner uphold [the teachings of Buddhism]. When someone has dignified conduct in all postures and activities, then he is a monk who is worthy and able to receive the teachings. Have you not seen dolichos leaning on a pine

CDL 9.150. Translation from Cheng-chien, trans., *Sun-Face Buddha*, pp. 24–25.

tree, rising upwards for a thousand *xun*?[80] When someone depends and relies on superior causes, then he can obtain extensive benefits.[81]

Although transcending the expedient teachings can be construed as a religious goal for those talented few who had the ability to directly enter the numinous realm of awakening, Guishan suggested that for most monks the expedient practices of traditional Buddhism were the best way to approach religious cultivation. The advice given to those monks who had religious aspirations and possessed intellectual abilities, but who were unable to "suddenly transcend the expedient teachings," was to study and reflect on the doctrines of Buddhism, as they were presented in the scriptures. Further, the text also advised that monks should be involved in the propagation and transmission of Buddhist doctrines, and that they should also lead exemplary lives that were worthy of respect. The text makes it clear that, although it was believed that renunciation of all practices took place at the moment of awakening, for all those who had not attained such a level of spiritual development the traditional practices noted above—observance of monastic discipline, and study, reflection, and practice of the teaching of Buddhism—were the most productive forms of religious cultivation.

> Earnestly practice the pure precepts, without deception, deficiency, and transgression. From lifetime to lifetime there are outstanding and sublime causes and effects. You cannot afford to pass your days aimlessly, letting time go by in a haze. It is a pity when time is wasted without seeking [spiritual] progress. Consuming the offerings of the faithful from the ten directions in vain, such people also fail to repay the four kinds of benevolence. They accumulate [evil karma] and [their ignorance] gets progressively deeper, while their minds' impurities are apt to obstruct [their spiritual development]. Whichever way they try to go, they come to a standstill, and they are disparaged and ridiculed by other people. Therefore it has been said, "He is already a man, and so am I; there is no

[80] *Xun* 尋 is an ancient measure of length that is roughly equivalent to 182 cm.

[81] T 48.1043b; XZJ 111.147b.

need to belittle oneself and shrink back."[82] If someone is not like that, then he has entered the monastic order in vain; as he lets his whole life to slip by, really he obtain no benefit whatsoever.[83]

In the final paragraph of this section, the text again stresses the importance of the rules of discipline and the rest of the traditional monastic practices and observances. The text also offers additional reminder that it is a pity to waste precious time that could most profitably be used for religious cultivation. Monks should not shrink back when faced with the daunting religious task that awaits them. Guishan reminds them that the Buddha and the other great Buddhist teachers of the past were also only men, rather than some special supernatural beings. The sages of the past faced the same obstacles as themselves, and were able to overcome them with their wholehearted effort and persistent practice. It is only by emulating their example, concludes Guishan, that every monk's entry into the monastic order acquires true value and meaning, and can bring benefit to himself and to others.

***Section 5***. The last prose section of the text contains Guishan's concluding instructions and exhortations. This section contains little that is new. It mostly recapitulates and further elaborates on some of the main themes that were dealt with in the previous sections. In the first paragraph, Guishan once more implores its monastic audience to give rise to an ardent determination to practice the teachings of Buddhism, and to examine and perfect its daily conduct.

[82] The quotation is a paraphrase from a passage in the "Duke Wen of Teng" (Teng wen gong 滕文公) chapter of *Mengzi* 孟子. The original passage reads "He is a man, and I am a man. Why should I stand in awe of him?" See Zhu Xi's *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注, p. 251. The same quotation also appears in other Chan text, such as ZJL 76, T 48.839a (where it is part of a verse attributed to the Buddha), CDL 26.148 (in Guizong Huicheng's 歸宗慧誠 biography), and Dahui's 大慧 *Zheng fayan zang* 正法眼藏, XZJ 118.20b.

[83] T 48.1043b; XZJ 111.147c.

I sincerely hope that you will establish a determined [spiritual] aspiration and will engender an exceptional frame of mind. In terms of your conduct, you should emulate those who are superior to you, and do not arbitrarily follow those who are mediocre and superficial. You must make a resolution [to achieve liberation] in this lifetime, and you should presume that no other person could do it for you. Putting your mind to rest and forgetting external conditions, do not oppose the various defilements. When the mind is empty and external objects are quiescent, one cannot pass through only because of being stuck [due to deeply-ingrained habitual patterns that have existed] for a long time. You should earnestly read this text, and exhort yourself at all times.[84]

After they set lofty religious goals, monks are advised to base their actual behavior on the actions of those who are suitable religious exemplars. They should emulate those who embody true spiritual virtues, and dissociate themselves from those who lack such attributes. The above paragraph also offers brief instructions about how to deal with mental defilements that are consistent with the religious teachings presented in other texts of the Hongzhou School. According to the interpretation presented here, opposing or trying to obliterate mental defilements is not useful, because this kind of effort is based on misapprehension of the non-substantial and illusory nature of defilements. Instead of engaging in a futile effort to obliterate essentially non-existent defilements, which actually reifies them even more, one is simply to put the mind to rest and let it return to its pristine state of purity. Such a pure state is mind's original condition before the bifurcation of dualistic thoughts sets in. By letting the mind return to its original nature, one is presumed to be able to experience the true nature of all things. Furthermore, in the last sentence of the above paragraph, the text provides a rationale for its own existence: to serve as a source of encouragement and exhortation to which monks will have easy recourse at all times.

[84] T 48.1043b; XZJ 111.147d.

> Make an effort to be a man in charge, and do not yield to human emotions. It is difficult, indeed, to avoid being affected by karmic recompense. When a voice is melodious, the echo is also harmonious, and when an object's shape is straight, the shadow is also upright.[85] The experience of cause and effect being also thus, how can you afford not to be worried and apprehensive about them.[86] Accordingly, a scripture says, "If karma that has been created over innumerable eons has not yet been destroyed, when right causes and conditions converge together, one will still receive one's own recompense."[87] Therefore, it is known that the punishment of the three realms kills people by entwining them with shackles. You should exert yourself and practice diligently—do not pass your days in vain. When you deeply know your faults and suffering, then you can encourage each other to persevere with your practice. Make a vow that for the next hundred eons and thousand lives you will everywhere be spiritual companions (*falü* 法侶) to each other.[88]

In the final paragraph, Guishan once more stresses the immediate ramifications of the workings of the law of karma. The operation of the intricate patterns of confluence between causes and effects is unavoidable, and the only way to free oneself from the causal nexus of conditioned existence is to realize Buddhist enlightenment. In the last two sentences, the text points to the communal nature of monastic life and practice. Though the realization of the truths of Buddhism is a personal experience, that experience is cultivated and actualized in the communal context of the religious brotherhood of monks. In the very last sentence, monks are advised to encourage each other in their practice, and to form strong bonds of spiritual comradeship that reach beyond their present lives.

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[85] This metaphor comes from Sengzhao's 僧肇 (374?-414) commentary of the *Vimalakirti Sūtra*, *Weimojie suoshuojing zhu* 維摩詰所說經註 (reference comes from Kajitani "Isan kyōsaku," *Zen no koten: Chūgoku*, p. 172).

[86] Following the T over the XZJ edition (which is obviously mistaken), i.e. reading *yingguo* 因果 instead of *yingen* 因跟.

[87] The quotation is from *Genbenshuo yiqie youbu binaiye* 根本說一切有部毗奈耶 6, T 23.657c.

[88] T 48.1042b; XZJ 111.147d–48b.

## Chan Attitudes Towards Discipline and Morality

In addition to its general value as a record about ninth century Chinese monasticism, *Guishan jingce* is especially important because it is the main source for the study of the Hongzhou School's attitudes towards monasticism and morality. Most striking thing about the text is to see how conventional are its author's views about monastic life and practice. If it were not for the brief description of Chan practice in section four, which has a vocabulary and a style of exposition that are characteristic of the Hongzhou School's records, there is little in the text that indicates that it is a product of the Chan School. Guishan's presentation of the monastic ideal, which stresses monks' renunciation of secular values and activities and their single-minded devotion to the pursuit of religious perfection, is congruous with mainstream views about the monastic ethos that were officially upheld (even if not always practiced) by the larger monastic community, and were recognized by the wider Chinese society. In the same vein, Guishan's exhortations to monks to lead disciplined monastic lives dedicated to the study, practice, and realization of the teachings of Buddhism present him as a religious leader who conceived of monastic life and practice in terms of the values espoused by the mainstream Buddhist establishment.

Generally speaking, in the Buddhist tradition, as in other religious traditions, the monastic rules fulfilled two functions, both of which are implicitly affirmed in *Guishan jingce*. First, they served as communal rules that regulated monks' daily life and created good order in the monastery. In this sense, they formed a communal charter that organized monastic life in ways that created an environment that reflected Buddhist values and beliefs, and codified an institutional system that was conducive to monks' pursuit of religious practice and realization. In addition, the monastic rules also served as

guides for proper religious conduct, which molded individual monk's internal and external attitudes, and reinforced his commitment to leading a religious life.[89] As such, the monastic rules provided the broad contextual framework for spiritual life and practice, and fostered individual mores and attitudes that were conducive to pursuit of the religious path, as it was understood and accepted by the whole religious community. In the case of the Chan School, disciplined monastic life was integrated within the overall thrust of Chan soteriology, which was presumed to lead to the realization of the monk's true nature and his attainment of spiritual liberation.

In his treatise, Guishan clearly reveals concern for both the communal and personal facets of monastic practice. He puts emphasis on the harmonious functioning of the whole monastic community, and at the same time he also concerns himself with the purity of individual monks' religious aspiration and their commitment to the genuine pursuit of their vocation. The communal and personal aspects were not really separable, because the smooth operation of religious life in the monastery depended on individual monks' espousal of identical religious values and their commitment to the communal pursuit of their tradition's religious goals. Such a unity of purpose and action was apparently difficult to achieve, in large part because the monastic communities attracted a large number of people with diverse motives and expectations, not all of whom were interested in single-minded pursuit of spiritual goals. Guishan's treatise was probably written in response to that kind of situation, in which internal and external factors impinged on Guishan's and other monastic leaders' ability to fashion their monastic

[89] See Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasoning Power in Christianity and Islam*, p. 137.

communities in such ways that in both spirit and actual everyday practice they embodied the traditional values of Buddhist monasticism.

When looking into *Guishan jingce* for clues about Hongzhou School's views about the role of monastic precepts and conventional morality in Chan's soteriological program, the text can be interpreted as presupposing a two-tiered structuring of the religious path. The higher level of the path is centered on the Chan ideal of radical transcendence of the mundane realm of delusion and defilement. As described in text's fourth section, this level of spiritual experience is actualized through the attainment of complete detachment and the simultaneous immediate, non-conceptual realization of the nature of reality.

Nonetheless, although the Chan ideal of sudden enlightenment was perhaps essential for the formation of monks' views about the nature of the path and the ultimate goal of spiritual practice, the text also makes it clear that it was understood that the actualization of sudden enlightenment was not an easy task at all. In theory, stemming from the widely accepted belief that the Buddha nature was inherent in every person, everybody was considered capable of realizing the truth and achieving religious perfection. In reality, however, it was apparent that leading an authentic religious life was not an easy undertaking, and that successfully arrival at the end of the spiritual journey was a goal that was even more difficult to achieve. Despite the pervasive implicit acceptance of the Mahayana promise of universal salvation, it appears ninth century monks were aware that in reality only few exceptional individuals were able to achieve the goal of spiritual practice within a single lifetime. Those who were able to do so joined the ranks of Buddhist saints, among who noted Chan teachers formed a distinct group. Chan teachers commanded great respect and were commemorated by their followers

precisely because their spiritual accomplishments were considered to be so exceptional, notwithstanding the Chan rhetoric about the accessibility of the Chan experience of enlightenment to all.

For those who were not able to simply "suddenly go beyond the expedient teachings" and directly realize the truth, Guishan recommended a conventional program of religious practice. That consisted of the traditional practices of Buddhism, which helped the aspiring monk to develop spiritually, and enabled him to reach the point from where he could attempt to make the final jump into the abstruse realm of the enlightened vision of reality. The conventional practices of Buddhism based on the teachings of the scriptures were the second approach acknowledged by Guishan, which complemented the sudden approach of Chan. Observance of monastic discipline was, together with other traditional practices like study of the scriptures and reflection on their teachings, an essential part of this approach.

The crux of the problem with interpreting Chan soteriology hinges on the interpretation of the relationship between these two approaches, which can be termed the "sudden" and the "conventional" (or perhaps "gradual," if we were to follow the terminology of the sectarian "sudden versus gradual" debates). The current interpretations of Hongzhou Chan as an iconoclastic tradition presume that there is an unbridgeable gap between the two, i.e. that the "sudden" approach inevitably implies rejection of traditional practices, including the observance of monastic precepts and conventional morality. *Guishan jingce* makes it clear, I think, that was not the case.

In the text these two methods—the one focused on the sudden experience of enlightenment and the other on the gradual perfection of insight and the development of wholesome spiritual qualities—are not presented as diametrically opposed approaches to

religious life. Instead, Guishan presented them both as viable approaches to spiritual cultivation, each of which complements and reinforces the other. His exposition is somewhat reminiscent of Bodhidharma's treatise on the two "entrances" and four practices, *Erru sixing lun* 二入四行論, in which both the sudden-like approach of "entry through the principle" (*liru* 理入) and the more conventional approach of "entry through practice" (*xingrui* 行入) are presented as equally viable methods of religious practice.[90] There is nothing in *Guishan jingce* to imply that the experience of sudden awakening is divorced from any monastic practices. Though the text concurs with the common assumption that at the moment of sudden awakening the Chan adept transcends all beliefs, doctrines, and practices, at the same time that experience is described as taking place within the context of disciplined monastic life. The Chan experience of sudden enlightenment is fully integrated within the overall religious and institutional structures of traditional monastic practice, just as the description of Chan practice in section four is fully integrated in the *Guishan jingce*'s conventional depiction of monastic life.

In *Guishan jingce*, the experience of sudden awakening is construed as the apex of religious realization. That is presented as the high point of the Buddhist path, at which the diverse spiritual qualities and practices that constitute authentic religious life are merged into a holistic whole in which there is perfect balance between spiritual insight and actual everyday activity. At the same time, far from being an inferior approach rejected by those who have true understanding of the religious path, in terms of the totality of religious experience, the conventional level of traditional monastic practices and observances

[90] For the text of *Erru sixing lun* and its Japanese translation, see Yanagida Seizan, ed., *Daruma no goroku: Ninyū shigyō ron*, pp. 31–47. For English translations, see McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 103–05, and Jeffrey L. Broughton, trans., *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen*, pp. 9–12.

serves as the basis of all authentic spirituality, a stepping stone for the realization of ultimate reality. Guishan integrated monastic discipline into Chan practice by simultaneously asserting and collapsing the two levels of religious discourse: the radical non-dualism of Chan doctrine of sudden awakening on one hand, and the conventional description of monks' everyday practices and observance as part of a comprehensive and progressive regiment of religious cultivation.

*Guishan jingce* shows that the moral foundation of Chan soteriology was understood in terms of traditional monastic formulation of Buddhist morality. As the text repeats again and again, monks were expected to serve as moral exemplars, and they were encouraged to lead impeccable lives that were judged by ethical standards that were higher and more refined than those observed by the rest of society. As far as attitudes towards monastic discipline were concerned, the followers of the Hongzhou School were apparently not that different from other Buddhist monks. The moral basis of their religious practice was the traditional monastic discipline of Buddhist monasticism.

There was a sense of contradiction between Chan's radical subitist rhetoric, which called for transcendence of conventional Buddhist practices (implicitly implying transcendence of monastic rules), and the injunction to faithfully observe monastic discipline. However, that contradiction was only apparent, because the transcendence of conventional practices that was supposedly actualized at the moment of sudden awakening did not imply a rejection of conventional moral norms. With awakening, conventional ethical norms were internalized and integrated into a higher state of heightened spiritual awareness and insight. All the same, that sense of contradiction could be exploited and used as an excuse to justify amoral behavior or lax religious practice. The danger of such abuse was probably relatively small when monks like Guishan, who

stressed the importance of upholding the ethical principles of Buddhism monasticism, imparted the teachings about sudden enlightenment in the setting of disciplined monastic life. But once such teachings were removed from their original monastic contexts, they could indeed be (mis)used to corroborate antinomian interpretations of Chan practice.

It is probable that an awareness of this problem was one of the reasons behind Guishan's writing of the treatise. We are in no position to judge if Guishan was writing in part as a response to some monks' justification of their laxity and corruption by alluding to specific Chan teachings or concepts. It does seem, however, that the text makes an extra effort to show the centrality of morality and monastic discipline in Chan soteriology. Efforts of this kind were to a large extent successful. During the following centuries, the Chan School did maintain its essential monastic character, despite the constant problems of monastic laxity and corruption, which for the most part continued to be very much like the ones described in the present text.

## Concluding Remarks

*Guishan jingce* consists primarily of a series of spiritual admonitions in which Guishan instructs his monastic audience about how to lead proper and purposeful religious lives conductive to the realization of the truths of Buddhism. Guishan's edifying observations are presented in a manner that reveals genuine concern with monastic life and discipline. Throughout the whole text, the views about monastic discipline and morality are presented in a rather conventional manner. With its strong emphasis on the importance of keeping the monastic precepts as an essential prerequisite for religious life, the text is for all intents and purposes very much a part of the large corpus of monastic writings about monastic discipline and practice.

In contrast to the popular view of Chan as an iconoclastic tradition that rejected traditional Buddhist practices and standards of ethical conduct, *Guishan jingce* reveals that the Hongzhou School's conception of Chan soteriology was grounded in the religious and institutional milieus of traditional Buddhist monasticism. The text shows that within the Hongzhou School disciplined monastic life was accepted as an essential foundation for successful spiritual practice, and that the basic religious attitudes and values of Mazu's followers were very much within the mainstream of the Chinese Buddhist tradition. In that sense, the contents of *Guishan jingce* provide strong evidence in support of the arguments about the relationship between Chan and Buddhist monasticism presented in the previous chapter, where I argued that the Hongzhou School was an integral part of the mainstream monastic order.

*Guishan jingce* shows that the Hongzhou teachers saw monastic discipline and Chan practice as two complementary aspects of a comprehensive approach to religious practice. Each of them addressed a particular facet of spiritual life, and they were both integrated into a unified vision of the Buddhist path. On a communal level, monastic discipline provided an institutional context that made the Chan quest for enlightenment possible, while on a personal psychological level, it installed specific religious attitudes and convictions that sustained Chan adepts throughout the course of their spiritual practice. The sudden enlightenment paradigm, on the other hand, served as a soteriological framework that defined the broader contours of Chan's conception of practice and realization and imbued everyday monastic life with a higher sense of ultimate purpose. In this manner, the Hongzhou School integrated its particular soteriological schemata with the values and practices of the Chinese monastic tradition.

For Guishan and his contemporaries, adherence to monastic mores and observances was an essential part of Buddhism. They saw the monastery as the institutional context that made the whole Chan quest for spiritual liberation possible. With *Guishan jingce* we are as far removed from Chan's supposed iconoclastic spontaneity—epitomized by numerous encounter dialogues stories—as it is possible to imagine. In terms of its attitudes towards monastic life and morality, far from being a rejection of traditional Buddhist monasticism, the Hongzhou School was very much an integral part of it. We can only make sense of Chan soteriology, and the broader doctrinal outlook that accompanied it, if we take into account the institutional and religious context in which Chan teachings were taught and put into practice, which is no other than the world of medieval Chinese Buddhist monasticism.

## *Conclusions*

> [One day] Nanquan came across the monks from the eastern and western halls of the monastery, who were quarreling over a cat. He told the assembled monks, "If you are able to say something [that will accord with the truth], then you will save the cat. If you cannot say anything, then I will kill the cat." The monks had no response, and Nanquan killed the cat. [Later, when] Zhaozhou returned from outside, Nanquan told him about what had happened. Zhaozhou then took off his shoes, put them on the top of his head, and went out. Nanquan said, "If you were here earlier, you would have saved the cat."[1]

The above story about Nanquan (747–834) killing the cat is one of the best-known anecdotes in Chan literature.[2] The story raises intriguing ethical questions about Chan's attitudes towards traditional Buddhist morality, and highlights some of the problems arising from the purported introduction of novel radical teaching methods by the Hongzhou School. It goes without saying that Nanquan's act of killing the cat was a complete transgression of the monastic rules of discipline, which as an abbot of a Buddhist monastery he was supposed to embody. The act of killing the cat constitutes a

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[1] CDL 8.133 (T 51.258a); cf. Chang Chung-yuan, trans., *Original Teachings of Chan Buddhism*, p. 156.

[2] The earliest version of the whole story can be found in Nanquan's biography in CDL, which was compiled 170 years after Nanquan's death. The first part of the story (up to Nanzhuan's killing of the cat) appears in Deshan's biography in ZTJ 5.130, and predates the CDL version by half a century. The story is often repeated in later Chan texts; it can also be found in the three main *gongan* collections: as cases no. 63 and 64 in *Biyan lu* 碧巖錄, T 48.194c-95b (for an English translation see Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary, trans., *The Blue Cliff Record*, pp. 406–11); in *Wumen guan* 無門關, T 48.294c; and as case no. 9 in *Zongrong lu* 從容錄, T 48.232b–33a. For recent Japanese scholarly interpretations of Nanquan's story, see Harada Norio, "Nansen zanmyō," *Kyōtō joshi daigaku jinbun ronsō* 23 (1974), pp. 86–97, Okimoto Katsumi, "Zen shisō keiseishi no kenkyū," in *Kenkyū Hōkoku* 5, pp. 410–22, and Ishii Shūdō, *Chūgoku zenshū shiwa*, pp. 260–65.

gross infringement of the basic principles that govern religious life, a transgression of even the most basis formulation of Buddhist morality, the five precepts.[3] Because the proscription against taking life was one of the cornerstones of Buddhist morality, lay and monastic, both prior to and during the Tang period, Nanquan's act of killing the cat was a striking example of unconventional behavior that went beyond a simple transgression of a monastic precept.

Here I quote Nanquan's story as an extreme example of the kind of textual "evidence" that is usually used by most scholars to lend support to the widely-accepted, but also one-sided and misleading portrayal of the Hongzhou School as an iconoclastic tradition that discarded traditional Buddhist spirituality and rejected mainstream monastic mores and regulations. As a consequence of the prevalent use of this kind of late materials for the study of mid-Tang Chan, there is the presumption that Hongzhou School's supposedly novel ethical and religious stances, epitomized in numerous encounter dialogue stories, were related to its revolutionary conception of religious praxis that centered on the experience of sudden awakening. The emergence of such a new outlook, which is described as a major paradigm shift in the history of Chinese Buddhism, was supposedly accompanied by a decisive effort to separate Chan from the mainstream traditions of Chinese Buddhism and to develop a new system of religious life and practice.

In this dissertation, I have taken a fresh look at the historical background that shaped the emergence of the Hongzhou School as a major tradition of Chan during the mid-Tang period, and have attempted to implement a different approach to the subject that is based on more relevant and reliable sources, and on a more exact interpretation of

[3] The five precepts consist of proscriptions against taking life, lying, stealing, engaging in improper sexual relationships, and consuming alcohol and other intoxicating substances.

the data they contain. As we saw in the preceding pages, the early sources are at odds with the popular image of the Hongzhou School as a radical tradition that rejected mainstream Buddhism. Instead, the Tang documents present the Hongzhou School as a religious movement that on the whole was a much less revolutionary departure from the rest of Chinese Buddhism than is usually assumed. The picture that emerges from the new approach to Chan history adopted here turns the focus away the dramatic pathos imbedded in the current "dialogue-centric" descriptions of classical Chan that fill books on Chan/Zen. In comparison with the imaginative apocryphal stories in which monks become enlightened by being hit by a Chan teacher, the actual story of the Hongzhou School's emergence as a distinctive tradition, which I have tried to tell here, might seem somewhat prosaic. It is a story in which spiritual life follows more conventional models and takes place in the context of mainstream monastic institutions. That is the medieval elite religious life in which matters of monastic finance, establishment of patterns of economic support and political patronage with the upper classes, and procurement of imperial recognition and backing were almost as important for the flourishing of Chan as was spiritual vibrancy.

The conception of the Hongzhou School presented in this study implies a rejection of the mythos of Chan's uniqueness, which permeates virtually all discussion of Chan/Zen. The notion that classical Chan, especially as formulated by Mazu and his followers, was in some sense radically distinct from the rest of Buddhism was articulated as part of Song Chan ideology (even though it was not really put into actual practice). The idea of Chan/Zen uniqueness was also appropriated and further embellished by the sectarian Zen traditions in Japan, whose ideological constructs have served as a prism through which virtually all modern interpretations of Chan history and doctrine have been refracted. But if we want further to advance the field of Chan studies, we must avoid the

tendency to adopt a teleological viewpoint informed by tacit acceptance of the ideological presuppositions of the later Chan/Zen traditions. Doing so inevitably results in imputing to the Hongzhou School a set of attitudes and predispositions that were not characteristic of it.

## Reasons for the Hongzhou School's Success

Within the broad Sinitic Buddhist tradition, the rise to unchallenged preeminence of the Southern School of Chan was not so much a direct consequence of the decisive success of Shenhui's acrimonious campaigns against the Northern School, or any similar attempts to delineate sectarian divisions within the Chan movement, as interpretations based on such partisan sources as Shenhui's records and the *Platform Scripture* have suggested. Both Shenhui's actions and the ostensibly biased contents of the *Platform Scripture* were criticized by members of the Hongzhou School, as well as by other noted Chan teachers, and were not representative of most of the late eight and early ninth century Chan movement.[4] Instead, the present study suggests that the Southern School's eclipsing of all other schools of early Chan and its emergence as an uncontested Chan orthodoxy were above all due to the phenomenal success of Mazu and his numerous disciples. Within the short time-span of only a few decades, these energetic monks were able to spread their movement throughout most of the Tang empire. In large part their success was due to their ability to transform the Hongzhou School from a regional southern tradition into a broad religious movement that had a presence in most parts of the vast Tang empire. That success was based on a three-pronged "strategy," which involved the creation of a strong regional base in Jiangxi and the nearby southern provinces, the setting up of monastic centers in other parts of the empire, and the establishment of a solid presence in the two

[4] See Chapters Five and Six.

Tang capitals. Such a pattern of the Hongzhou School's spread throughout the Tang empire was of course not a result of carefully planned and executed strategy, but a fortuitous confluence of numerous conditions and circumstances that favored the Hongzhou School's rapid raise to preeminence.

A main factor that contributed to the Hongzhou School's success was Mazu's quick rise to fame as the main Chan teacher of the mid-Tang period, which was reflected in the large number of monks who came to study with him. Perhaps even more important than Mazu's personal dominance of the late-eight-century Chan movement was his success in training numerous capable disciples. As many of Mazu's disciples established their own monastic congregations and became well-known teachers, they transformed the regional tradition established by their charismatic teacher into a truly national tradition that came to dominate the whole Chan School. While Xitang, Baizhang, and the other monks who were active in the area where Mazu taught, reinforced the position of Jiangxi (and more broadly the South) as the main geographical center of Chan, an instrumental role in the emergence of the Hongzhou School as the main Chan tradition was also played by the disciples of Mazu who taught in the two Tang capitals. Through their successful proselytizing activities, these monks disseminated the teachings of the Hongzhou School to a wider audience, fostered the consolidation of Mazu's image as a key patriarchal figure in Chan history, and elicited official recognition and support that facilitated the Hongzhou School's further integration into the mainstream of the Chinese Buddhist tradition.

The successful growth of the Hongzhou School was foremost due to the personal influence of its charismatic leaders, and the direct impact of their dynamic religious

personalities and activities on their contemporaries.[5] In terms of Max Weber's typology of authority, we can say that Mazu and his leading disciples aptly combined traditional and charismatic religious authority.[6] The exercise of traditional authority, which is based on conveying a religious message sanctified by long-established traditions and holding of traditionally sanctioned office, is evident in Mazu's formal position as an abbot of an official monastery, and his role as a respected teacher who combined knowledge of the canonical tradition with expertise in contemplative practice—both of which were key elements of traditional Buddhism. At the same time, monks like Mazu and Baizhang also possessed charismatic authority, which disrupts established traditions and relies for its support on the person of the leader. Their charisma was predicated on the belief, most strongly upheld by their close disciples, that they had sacred knowledge about the nature of reality that they could manifest through their words or acts, and impart to others. In that sense, the revolutionary force behind their charisma was corralled by their taking on the responsibilities (and privileges) of traditional authority. That involved a balancing act that harnessed the forces of opposing conservative and progressive impulses and tendencies. That kind of fine-tuned dance—which can further be clarified by introducing the heuristic concept of a traditionalism/iconoclasm dichotomy discussed below—resulted in the creation of the image of a Chan teacher who functioned both within and without the prevailing traditions, and who both challenged and embodied accepted values and virtues.

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[5] Here I use the concept of charisma in the sense formulated by Max Weber. He defined charisma as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader." Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, pp. 358–59.

[6] See Ibid., p. 328.

Even though throughout Chan history there was an emphasis on the role of individual Chan teachers and the ways they embodied and communicated their spiritual teachings, the contents and spiritual potency of their ideas were still important. Generally speaking, there was not much that was strikingly new in the Hongzhou School's doctrinal outlook. For the most part, the views expressed by its leaders were based on religious insights that were articulated in earlier canonical sources, and were widely accepted as normative by most of Sinitic Buddhism, including the other traditions of Chan. Instead of opening completely new vistas in the doctrinal evolution of Sinitic Buddhism, Chan teachers like Mazu and Baizhang distinguished themselves by the creative ways in which they expressed mainstream doctrinal tents and the distinctive manner in which they applied those same ideas in their explication of a vibrant approach to religious cultivation. They were especially adept at inventing, or skillfully adopting, attention-grabbing catchphrases—such as "mind is Buddha" and "ordinary mind is the way"—that in concrete and engaging ways conveyed key Mahayana doctrines and delineated essential attitudes towards spiritual cultivation.

As part of their reformulation of key Mahayana doctrines, Chan teachers took rarefied religious ideas that were widely accepted as the culminating insights of the Buddhist path and expressed them in distinctive ways that appealed to monks with contemplative interests. They were also able to appeal to sophisticated officials and literati, who—as can be seen from numerous poems and other related documents composed by Tang literati—were attracted by Chan teachers' religious personalities and captivated by the prospect of being able to obtain a glimpse of the ineffable realm of enlightenment. Chan teachings such as Baizhang's "three phases" combined an impression of intellectual sophistication with a sense of spiritual exigency, and conveyed the prospect of actualizing the immediacy of awakening within the context of everyday

life. While Baizhang's teaching was an engaging new description of the path to spiritual awakening, at the same time it also conveyed deep insights about the nature of religious practice and experience that were at the core of Sinitic reformulations of Mahayana Buddhism. Moreover, Baizhang framed his exegesis with the help of copious quotations and allusions to canonical texts, which at the same time blurred the boundaries between his own ideas and those of the canonical tradition.

Another factor that contributed to the Hongzhou School's emergence as the main tradition of Chan were the sagging fortunes of the other schools of Chan. The Hongzhou School's rise to preeminence coincided with the diminished vitality of the other main Chan groups that were dominant during the eight century, when Mazu first emerged as a popular teacher. Although the Northern School flourished under Shenxiu's disciples Yifu (658–736) and Puji (651–739), and continued to thrive under their disciples, by the early ninth century (and probably even earlier) it lost most of its vitality, and eventually died out.[7] Furthermore, the last great leaders of the Niutou School were Mazu's contemporaries Jingshan Faqin (714–792) and Niutou Huizhong (683–769). Soon after the death of these two highly successful monks, the Niutou School also disappeared from the religious scene. The shift from the Niutou School's heyday towards the Hongzhou School's ascendancy can already be traced to Mazu's lifetime, when a number of monks who started their Chan training with Niutou teachers ended up becoming Mazu's disciples. A similar fate of decline and eventual demise awaited other regional Chan traditions, such as the Jingzhong and Baotang lineages from Sichuan. Other noted Chan teachers who lived during the eight century, such as Nanyang Huizhong (d. 775) and Shenhui, despite their popularity, were not successful in attracting and training capable

[7] See McRae, *The Northern School*, pp. 67–69, 242–44, and Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy*, pp. 91–93.

disciples, which was essential for the establishment and continuation of any new Chan lineage. By the early ninth century, then, the Hongzhou School surfaced as the most vital and influential Chan tradition, and for all practical purposes it became virtually synonymous with the Chan School (although there were still individuals like Zongmi, who unsuccessfully tried to push forward alternative visions of Chan orthodoxy).

### The Hongzhou School's Place in Chan History

Throughout the early and middle parts of the ninth century, the Hongzhou School clearly dominated the Chan movement. During the second half of the ninth century, after the end of the Huichang era persecution of Buddhism, Chan groups that traced their origin to Shitou, especially what later became known as the Caodong 曹洞 School, also gained in popularity. As a result of their enhanced status, to some extent they were able to revise the contours of the "orthodox" tradition of Chan, which came to include, in addition to Mazu's disciples, lineages that traced back their spiritual ancestry to Shitou. During this period, the conception of the Hongzhou School as a coherent movement gradually came to be superceded by the emergence of various regional traditions, all of which saw themselves as parts of the larger Chan tradition that was identified with the Southern School of Chan, and traced their spiritual genealogies to either Mazu or Shitou.

An awareness of such separate Chan lineages (*pai* 派) is evident in Fayan Wenyi's 法眼文益 (885–958) *Zongmen shigui lun* 宗門十規論.[8] There he lists the Guiyang, Deshan 德山, Linji 臨濟, Caodong, Xuefeng 雪峰, and Yunmen 雲門 lineages as the main representatives of the Chan School. By the early Song, four of these—Guiyang, Linji, Caodong, and Yunmen—together with the Fayan lineage, became known as the five schools of Chan. Within this new configuration, the broader movement

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[8] XZJ 110.439d

established by Mazu and his disciples was replaced by several narrower lineages of Chan, which for the most part emerged as regional traditions during the political fragmentation of the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods. During the early Song, as the Chinese empire again became unified, one of these Chan schools, the Linji School, emerged at the center of the Chan movement as the bearer of Chan orthodoxy. The other schools simply died out or merged into the Linji School, with the exception of the Caodong School, which resurfaced during the late Song as a more organized tradition, and from the thirteen century gained a stronger institutional identity and larger following in Japan, where it is known as the Sōtō School.

From the Song period onward, the Linji School continued its dominant position and was accepted as the main bearer of Chan orthodoxy throughout most of East Asia. Since the Linji School was regarded as a direct successor of the Hongzhou School, the tradition formed by Mazu and his disciples continued to occupy a central place in all normative narratives about Chan history, which depicted the Tang period as the golden age of Chan. Mazu and his leading disciples—especially Baizhang, who came to be revered as the fonder of Chan monasticism—thus remained entrenched in their positions as seminal figures whose words and actions defined Chan orthodoxy, even if some of the luster of Mazu's religious personality was transferred to Linji, and the image of the Hongzhou School was altered in ways that reflected the ideological stances of the later Chan/Zen traditions.

**Formation of Religious Traditions in Medieval China**

When observed from a broader comparative perspective, it is probably not that surprising to find out that the religious groupings within Chinese Buddhism show a pattern that is distinct from that of non-Asian religious traditions such as Christianity. But it is also

significant that they differ considerably from the groupings of Buddhist traditions in other parts of Asia, such as Japan or Tibet. The patterns of sectarian formation found in other traditions—such the creation of institutionally independent religious sects, as in the case of Tibetan and Japanese Buddhism, not to mention the creation of independent orders which recognize a single highest ecclesiastical authority within a unified Church, as in the case of Catholicism—do not offer useful models that can be readily applied to the study of Chinese Buddhism. Quite to the contrary, the indiscriminate use of inappropriate models—which is especially the case with the prevalent use of the sectarian model of Japanese Buddhism—has led to problematic readings not only of the history of the Chan School, but also of the history of the rest of Chinese Buddhism. The Chinese Buddhist tradition was distinctive in a sense that it was able to accommodate a variety of beliefs, doctrines and practices, some of which catalyzed the development of distinctive schools of Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism achieved such general unity without on the whole losing the basic nonsectarian orientation of an open religious tradition that lacked a strong institutional center.

One of the keys to the general stability and endurance of the devolved organizational structure of Chinese Buddhism, which lacked rigid system of centralized religious hierarchies, was the general unity of the monastic order. Such unity was achieved without the establishment of powerful institutions with central ecclesiastical authority (although at times the imperial governments did try to impose such an authority). In spite of the fact that various groups of monks formed loosely structured ties and collective identities, as was the case with those monks who identified themselves with the Chan School, all Chinese monks received the same ordination and belonged to

the same monastic order.[9] Notwithstanding the occasional rise of sectarian proclivities within the monastic community, as a whole the Chinese monastic order resisted the temptation to splinter into separate sects, and continued to preserve a sense of broad unified tradition that subsumed a variety of doctrinal interpretations and approaches to religious practice that coexisted in relative harmony.

The key to a balanced understanding of the Hongzhou School and its place in Tang religious life lies in discerning the subtle interplay between patterns of continuity and rupture with the previous Buddhist traditions that characterized its emergence as a distinct part of Chinese Buddhism. One of the driving forces shaping that process was the creative tension created by the interaction between traditionalism and iconoclasm as two concurrent features in the formation of distinct religious identity. By employing the traditionalism/ iconoclasm dichotomy, we can discern how the Hongzhou School's ability to find a balance between the need for adherence to long-established Buddhist traditions (traditionalism) on one hand, and its capacity to forge a new religious identity by rejection and/or reformulation of important aspects of those same traditions (iconoclasm) on another, contributed to its eventual success.

An example of the ability to strike such a balance can be seen in the attitudes towards religious authority evident in Mazu's and Baizhang's sermons. The copious inclusion of scriptural quotations in Chan sermons conveyed a sense of rapprochement between Chan and canonical tradition, which reflected the continuing influence of traditional religious authority. Yet, the dissolution of the boundaries between the words of the Buddha and the words of Chan teachers suggests the formulation of a new focus of

[9] Here I am only discussing monks who were properly ordained and belonged to the mainstream monastic order. Among the lower strata of society, there were privately ordained individuals, as well as non-ordained religious, who professed a variety of popular religious beliefs and performed diverse religious functions for the common people.

religious authority: the enlightened Chan teachers whose words and deeds embodied the truths of Buddhism.

Although the Hongzhou School was an integral part of the mainstream monastic tradition, there were characteristic features of its brand of Chan spirituality that defined its existence as a distinct group within Chinese Buddhism. The Hongzhou School created its own doctrinal outlooks, interpretations of religious practice, notions about religious authority, and a distinctive conception of its religious lineage. Even though the original sources of most of these elements can be traced back to earlier stages of Chan history, Mazu and his disciples were successful at creatively combining older elements derived from the canonical tradition with novel interpretations of various facets of Buddhism. Such reconfiguration of key religious ideas, together with the emergence of a group persona informed by the conception of distinct spiritual lineage of which Mazu was the central member, gave the Hongzhou School its separate identity as a religious tradition. When viewed from a wider perspective, the dissertation can thus also be read as a case study of the forces, issues, and dilemmas that shaped the formation of new religious traditions in medieval Chinese society.

If we look at the formation of the Hongzhou School as a case of creation of group religious identity in medieval Chinese Buddhism, we must take into account that already during the mid-Tang period there existed the notion of Chan as a distinct tradition largely defined by the notion of spiritual lineage, as can be see from such texts as *Baolin zhuan* and *Lidai fabao ji*. Affiliation with a particular Chan lineage was becoming one of the sources of spiritual identity for monks associated with the Chan School, and with the Hongzhou School we see a set of new attitudes that defined that identity in clearer terms. Parallel examples of the use of notions of spiritual genealogy in the construction of group religious identity can also be seen in other Buddhist traditions from the same period, such

as the Tiantai School. Nonetheless, during the mid-Tang the importance of notions of spiritual genealogy was not nearly as central as in the later Chan tradition, and was pursued with greater intensity mostly by monks on the margins, like Shenhui or Wuzhu of the Baotang School in Sichuan. A system of official monasteries whose abbacy was open only to monks who were officially recognized as members of the Chan lineage developed only during the Northern Song period, and nothing of that sort existed during the Tang. With some exceptions such as Shenhui and his cohorts, most major Chan groups that flourished during the mid-Tang period did not engage in heated sectarian disputes, or in debates about the status of the Chan lineage as a "separate transmission" of the truth of Buddhism, of the kind we find during the Song period.[10] While various Chan groups formed similar types of communal self-identity that incorporated the notion of belonging to a discrete spiritual lineage (as can be seen from extant epigraphic evidence), they still saw themselves as part of official monastic Buddhism, and showed little inclination to cause a schism in the monastic order or establish a separate institutional character.

Even if we take the emergence of the Hongzhou School as a form of dissent movement against the status quo that existed in Chinese Buddhism during the Tang period, perhaps motivated by the desire to renew and intensify the focus on the central religious experience of Buddhism (a hypothesis with which I disagree), we still have to conclude that such a dissent took place *within* the mainstream monastic institutions.[11] If there was any kind of clearly articulated dissension from the prevalent religious ethos,

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[10] For an overview of the Song debates over the status of Chan as a "separate transmission," see Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an," in Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., eds., *Buddhism in the Sung*, pp. 220–94.

[11] See Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*, pp. 173, 179.

that could have taken place in the areas of religious doctrine and contemplative practice, rather than in the institutional underpinnings of monastic life. Within such an interpretative framework, the emergence and subsequent flourishing of the Chan movement did not result in the creation of a new, sectarian movement, but was accommodated within the existing institutional structures of Tang Buddhism.[12]

I think that the notion that the Hongzhou School was anything resembling a clearly articulated dissent movement that aimed at subverting established Buddhist traditions is not an accurate description of its historical evolution. Mazu and his prominent disciples were extraordinary individuals who showed considerable creativity and were willing to experiment with novel reformulations of traditional Buddhist spirituality. At the same time, they were unlikely revolutionaries. Like the earlier "founders" of the other schools of Chinese Buddhism—such as Zhiyi of the Tiantai School and Zhiyan and Fazang of the Huayan School—they saw themselves as members of the monastic establishment, and did not show an interest in forming an institutionally independent religious sect.

A major problem with much of the research on Tang Chan is that there is a tendency to focus on only one pole of the traditionalism/iconoclasm dichotomy introduced above. Consequently, the Hongzhou School is depicted as an iconoclastic tradition whose emergence represented a radical paradigm-shift in the evolution of Chinese Buddhism. That kind of one-sided analysis, which turns a blind eye to all conservative tendencies and attitudes evident in the early sources, is not restricted to the Hongzhou School, and it has broader ramifications for the study of Chinese Buddhism and its place in Chinese religious life. Its larger interpretative framework is based on the

[12] See Theodore Griffith Foulk, "The Ch'an School and its Place in the Buddhist Monastic Tradition," p. 14.

notion that the history of medieval Chinese Buddhism can be explained as a history of gradual but irrevocable Sinification of all aspects of the Indian religion.

Comprehending the Chinese transformation of various Buddhist beliefs, doctrines, and practices is of course critical for understanding religious life in medieval China. The systematization of received traditions of religious philosophy and praxis by a Chinese Buddhist thinker like Zhiyi, for example, is a fascinating instance of a creative and far-reaching transformation of religious ideas that reveals multifaceted dimensions of Chinese religious sensibilities and intellectual orientations. But we also have to be aware that the Sinification narrative can be carried too far. We need to try to control the understandable tendency unconsciously to impute modern belief in the desirability of progress and change, and transfer some of the feelings of ambiguity or even open disdain for tradition that characterize the contemporary cultural ethos, to long-dead people from an alien culture who had very different beliefs and values.

Awareness of the intrinsic value of age-old traditions was a part of the medieval Chinese worldview. We cannot fully understand the history of Buddhism during this period by solely focusing on the Sinification aspects and ignoring the presence of conservative predispositions that led even highly talented and creative monks such as Zhiyi, Mazu, and Zhiyan to focus their spiritual searches on the foundational insights that were at the core of all traditions of Buddhist spirituality. When these immensely influential monks left their imprint on the history of Chinese religion by propounding their spiritual teachings, they were probably motivated more by an urge to elucidate to their contemporaries the meaning of Buddha's grand vision of reality, rather than by a desire to create brand new systems of religious doctrine that could serve as foundations for the creation of new schools of Sinitic Buddhism. Even as they were creating a new tradition, Mazu and his leading disciples accepted the cumulative wisdom of ancient

traditions of Buddhist spirituality they inherited, and continued to assert (and most probably sincerely believe) that they were simply trying to communicate their understanding of the essential experience of Buddhist religiosity, which in its most perfect form took place as the Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree in Northern India.

Appendix 1

## *Translation of the Preface to Mazu's Stele Inscription*

*Tang gu Hongzhou Kaiyuansi Shimen Daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu*

唐故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師碑銘并序[1]

by Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818)

The area west of Zhonglu is called Haihun. In the southern countryside of Haihun there is Shimen mountain. That is the location of the memorial pagoda of the great teacher Ma of the Chan School. Once, when I was traveling through great teacher's country, his disciples asked me to write a composition for his stele in order to exalt [the late teacher]. They said: "The three bodies of the Tathāgata have great compassion as their foundation, and wisdom is the key to the six perfections. If it were not for the superior virtues planted in his former lives, how could he [i.e. Mazu] have come to be like that?"

The great teacher's [religious] name was Daoyi. For generations his family had resided in Deyang. When he was born, he had an exceptional appearance. As a child he did not play children's games. He stood as imposing as a mountain, and was as still as the dammed water of a deep river. His tongue was so broad and long that it covered his nose. The soles of his feet were as nicely formed as if they had inscribed letters on them. He received his perfect character and spiritual abilities from heaven. While still young, he came to consider the nine schools of thought and the six classics to be

[1] There are three extant editions of Mazu's stele inscription: QTW 501.5106a–07a, *Tang wenzui* 唐文粹 64.1058–59, and *Quanzai zhi wenji* 權載之文集 28.167a–68a. The differences between the three editions are minor, and appear to be mostly due to copyists' errors. *Tang wenzui*'s edition is reproduced and rendered into Japanese *yomikudashi* reading in Iriya Yoshitaka 入矢義高, trans., *Baso no goroku* 馬祖の語錄, pp. 212–14. For additional information, see Chapter Three.

inadequate; being, after all, [merely] tools for governing the world, how could they be methods that aid transcendence of the world? The correct awakening of the method of liberation alone is the locale of the mind of those who possess supreme wisdom.

Initially the teacher had his head shaved in Zizhong, and he received the full precepts at Baxi. Later he heard that Chan teacher [Huai]rang at Hengyue received from the sixth patriarch [Huineng] at Caoxi the teaching that [directly] reaches the true mind, and is [thus] called the sudden approach. As soon as he heard [Huairang's] words, he was freed from mundane worries. Then for the first time he was like Yan Hui, [the disciple of Confucius,] who, even though his countenance was as if he were a fool, on hearing one knew ten. He was also like Vimalakīrti who, [according to the famous passage in the *Vimalakīrti Scripture*, responded with] silence to the [question about] non-duality. [Although] the teaching is considered to be without locus, the actual giving of religious guidance must be in accord with circumstances. Once, [the teacher] was teaching meditation at Xili mountain in Fu[zhou], and then he moved again south to Gonggong mountain in Qian. [Due to his teaching] the violent were tamed and the cruel were made benevolent. They looked up to his [exemplary] deportment, and their actions were greatly transformed.

Provincial Governor Pei [Xu], now a governor of Henan, was a follower [of Buddhism] for a long time; he had a strong faith in and respect for [the Buddhist teachings]. Using [the Buddhist practices] of meditation and wisdom he developed [the Confucian] virtues of clarity and sincerity. During the Dali period [766–779] Lu [Sigong] of the Department of State Affairs, the duke of Ji, was a civil governor. Traveling by boat and carriage, he came and invited the teacher to stay at the official residence [in Hongzhou]. During the first year of the Zhenyuan period [785], Li [Jian] of Chengji became a regional administrator of the area. He was diligent in his protection of the dharma sincerely, and he received the teacher's final teaching. [Mazu

taught him that,] generally speaking, for the sake of one [vehicle] one should forsake the three [vehicles], and one should renounce the provisional [teaching] in order to approach the true [teaching]. He revealed the unchanging, immaculate nature, and the teaching that is without discrimination and gradualness.[2] Once he said, "The Buddha is not far away from people; he is to be realized by comprehending the mind. The dharma does not accept anything, and the external objects are all suchness—how could it be divided into many?[3]" Because students get bogged down like Kuafu, they end up being subjected to insults. When one seeks [the truth], it [only] becomes more distant. And yet, the diamond and ghee are precisely in the heart. Thereupon, he untied the knot and opened the cover, like a sharp blade of a knife that cuts through a thick rope, or like sweet dew sprinkled over a dense grove. Following the flavor of [his teaching's] meaning, how could those who quickly obtain the virtuous benefit be accounted of.

When it was time for him to die, the teacher set cross-legged and announced his passing away. At that time, in the second month of the fourth year of the Zhenyuan era [788], he was eighty years old, and he had been a monk for sixty years. Beforehand, he designated a clear and open area at Shimen [mountain] as his final resting place. All of a sudden, he told his close disciples, "When the second month arrives I will return [here]. Take a note of it." When he was about to actually die, it was like putting together the two halves of a tally. When [Mazu's funeral] took place during the second month, it corresponded to the torching [of Buddha's body] in Kuśinagara. Monks and lay people, young and old, lost their voices [from crying too much] and approached the road [on which the funeral procession was passing]. While they were crossing a dry streambed, there was a torrential splash of dharma rain, and

[2] Or "the gradual teaching of non-discrimination."

[3] Or "how could there be many things in it."

when they reached the monastery gate there appeared varied mists of heavenly fragrances. On that occasion, when there was such a mystical response, the ignorant were unaware of it.

The monks [Dazhu] Huihai, [Xitang] Zhizang, Gaoying, [Ganquan] Zhixian, Zhitong, [Tianhuang] Daowu, Huaihui, [Xingshan] Weikuan, Zhiguang, Chongtai, Huiyun, and others, dedicated their bodies to his service and their minds penetrated his teaching. They considered our teacher's true nature to be calm, united with empty space, and [thought that] only his body would be transformed into relics. Following of the Western narrative has been transmitted here [i.e. China], and it cannot come to an end. Accordingly, they called upon his disciples, and followed the custom of cremation. Round like a pearl, pure as a jade, the brilliant flames rose fully. The building of this solemn affair [i.e. Mazu's stupa] was the respectful wish of all monks. With the arrival of the seventh year [of the Zhenyuan era, 791], after slow progress that was due to the disciples' devotion and sincere faith, the project was completed. I went there, and as I paid my respects I was able to briefly dispel my ignorance. Although a bird flies in the sky, it is not aware of near and far, but when the dharma cloud covers the world then it becomes clear and cool. Now, as to the writing of this inscription, I was unable to reject agreeing to it after numerous requests from the monks.

Appendix 2

## *Memorial Inscriptions of Chan Monks*

Stele inscriptions (*beiming* 碑銘) and similar types of commemorative compositions are the earliest, and usually most reliable sources of biographical information about Chan monks who lived during the Tang period. Well-known officials and literati, who in many instances knew personally the monk whose inscription they were asked to write, composed most of the inscriptions. The list that follows is far from being an exhaustive record of all extant inscriptions of Chan monks; instead, it focuses on those monks who figure most prominently in the present study.

**Baizhang**: *Tang Hongzhou Baizhangshan gu Huaihai chanshi daming* 唐洪州百丈山故懷海禪師塔銘, by Zhen Xu 陳詡. (1) QTW 446.2014a-b; (2) in *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, T 48.1156b-57a.

**Chengyuan:** *Nanyue Mituosi Chengyuan heshang bei* 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑, by Lü Wen 呂溫. (1) WYYH 866.4568b–70b; (2) QTW 630.2814c–15c.

**Daowu**: *Jingzhou chengdong Tianhuangsi Daowu chanshi bei* 荊州城東天皇寺道悟禪師碑, by Fu Zai 符載. QTW 691.3137c. (See also QTW 713.3244a-b, for Tianwang Daowu's *beiming*).

**Dayi**: *Xingfusi neidaochang gongfeng dade Dayi chanshi beiming* 興福寺內道場供奉大德大義禪師碑銘, by Wei Chuhou 韋處厚. QTW 715.3258a–59a.

**Huaihui**: *Tang Zhangjingsi Baiyan dashi beiming bingxu* 唐章敬寺百巖大師碑銘并序, by Quan Deyu 權德輿. (1) QTW 501.2260b-c; (2) WYYH 866.4568a-b.

**Huairang**: *Hengzhou boresi guanyin dashi beiming bingxu* 衡州般若寺觀音大師碑銘并序, by Zhang Zhengfu 張正甫. (1) QTW 619.2767b-c; (2) *Tang wenzui* 唐文粹 62.5b–6b; (3) *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載, T 49.595c–96a (the last version omits the closing verse section).

**Guishan**: *Tanzhou Daguishan Tongqingsi Dayuan chanshi beiming bingxu* 潭州大溈山同慶寺大圓禪師碑銘并序, by Zheng Yu 鄭愚. QTW 820.3832b–34b.

**Mazu**: *Tang gu Hongzhou Kaiyuansi Shimen Daoyi chanshi beiming bingxu* 唐故洪州開元寺石門道一禪師碑銘并序, by Quan Deyu 權德輿. (1) QTW 501.2261c-62a; (2) *Tangwenzui* 唐文粹 64.1058–59; (3) *Quanzai zhi wenji* 權載之文集 28.167a–68a.

**Ruman**: *Foguang heshang zhenzan bingxu* 佛光和尚眞讚并序, by Bo Juyi 白居易. QTW 677.3054c.

**Weikuan**: *Xijing Xingshansi chuanfatang bei* 西京興善寺傳法堂碑, by Bo Juyi 白居易. (1) QTW 678.3069c–70a; (2) *Boshi wenji* 白氏文集 41.11a–14a (SBCK ed.); (3) WYYH 866.4570b–71b.

**Wuxiang, Wuzhu, Mazu, and Xitang**: *Tang Zizhou Huiyi jingshe Nanchanyuan sizheng tang beiming* 唐梓州慧義精舍南禪院四證堂碑銘, by Li Shangyin 李商隱. QTW 780.3608b–09c.

**Xitang**: *Gonggongshan xitang chishi Dazhue chanshi chongjian dabaoguang da beiming* 龔公山西堂敕諡大覺禪師重建大寶光塔碑銘, by Tang Ji 唐技. *Ganzhoufuzhi* 贛州府志 16.14a–15a, and *Ganxianzhi* 贛縣志 50.3a–4b. Reproduced in Ishii Shūdō 石井修道, "Kōshūshū ni okeru Seidō Chizō no ichi ni tsuite" 洪州宗における西堂智藏の位置について. IBK 40/1 (1991), p. 281.

**Xuanxu**: *Jingzhou Nanquan Dayunsi gu Ranruo heshang bei* 荊州南泉大雲寺故蘭若和尚碑, by Lihua 李華. (1) WYYH 860.4541a–42b; (2) QTW 319.1431a-c.

**Xuefeng**: *Fuzhou Xuefengshan gu Zhenjue dashi beiming* 福州雪峰山故眞覺大師碑銘, by Huang Tao 黄滔. QTW 826.3857.

**Xuefeng**: *Xuefeng heshang daming bingxu* 雪峰和尚塔銘并序. In *Mingjue chanshi yulu* 明覺禪師語錄, T 47.673b-c.

**Yangshan**: *Yangshan Tongzhi dashi daming* 仰山通智大師塔銘, by Lu Xisheng 陸希聲. QTW 813.3792a-b.

**Yanguan**: *Hangzhou Yanguan-xian Haichan-yuan Chanmen dashi dabei* 杭州鹽官縣海昌院禪門大師塔碑, by Lu Jianqiu 盧簡求. (1) QTW 733.3354b-c; (2) WYYH 868.4578a–79a.

**Yaoshan**: *Lizhou Yaoshan gu Weiyan dashi beiming bingxu* 澧州藥山故惟儼大師碑銘并序, by Tang Shen 唐伸. QTW 536.2410c–11b.

**Zhenshu**: *Yangqishan Zhenshu dashi beiming* 陽岐山甄叔大師碑銘, by Zhi Xian 至賢. QTW 919.4245a-b.

**Zongmi**: *Kuifeng chanshi beiming bingxu* 圭峰禪師碑銘并序, by Pei Xiu 裴休. QTW 743.3408c–10a.

Appendix 3

## *Data about Mazu's Disciples*

The table presented below provides basic data about forty-three of Mazu's best-known first generation disciples. The following information is provided about each of these monks: dates or birth and death, province of birth, location of the main monastery where he taught, and biographical records in four major collections that are the main sources of biographical information about Chan monks from the Tang period. The names of Chan monks usually consists of the name of the area where particular monk's monastery was located—which is usually the mountain where the monastery was located, but it can also be the name of the prefecture or the name of the monastery itself—followed by monk's religious name. Thus, we have Huaihai (religious name) of Baizhang mountain, and Zhichang of Guizong monastery (rather than Lu mountain, though in some Chan texts he is also referred to as Rev. Lushan). The part of the name that in the main body of the present volume is used to refer to a particular monk is underlined. As main guiding principle, in deciding how to refer to any particular monk I have usually followed the manner in which traditional Chan sources usually identify that monk. That can be either by his religious name, or by the place where he taught, although there are exceptions to this rule (the appellative "Mazu" being one of them).

For the sake of convenience, each monk's place of birth and the geographical location of his monastery are listed by their location in the present-day Chinese provinces, rather than following the provincial boundaries that existed during the Tang dynasty (which did occasionally change during the period we are concerned with). The only exceptions are the two Tang capitals of Changan and Loyang, which are listed separately. When a particular monk extensively taught at more then one

monastery (e.g. Dayi), I have usually listed the location of the monastery with which he is most closely associated, but in some cases I have given two locations.

The references to monks' biographies in the last column are only to the four major collections—CDL, SGSZ, ZTJ, and QTW—that contain the bulk of the biographical material (which in the case of QTW mostly consist of stele inscriptions). The number after each title abbreviation refers to the fascicle number where the biography appears. An asterisk after a CDL fascicle number indicates that the monk in question has no biography, but only his name is listed at the beginning of that fascicle; in the case of SGSZ, it means that the monk is not accorded a full biography, but his brief biography is appended to one of the main biographies. Additional information about these and other relevant biographical sources is provided in the notes to Chapters Five and Six, where I discus the lives of individual monks.

In collecting data for the table, I have used a variety of sources, including the primary sources listed in the last column. Among the secondary sources, I am especially indebted to a series of articles by Suzuki Tetsuo 鈴木哲雄 on the sources for the study of Tang Chan that appeared in various issues of *Aichi gakuin daigaku bungakubu kiyō* 愛知學院大學紀要 (nos. 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16), and *Aichi gakuin daigaku ronsō* 愛知學院大學論叢 (no. 3) (the titles of the articles have been omitted for the sake of brevity). Additional information about most of these monks can be found dispersed throughout Suzuki's two books on the history of Chan during the Tang and Five Dynasties, *Tō-godai zenshū shi* and *Tō-Godai no zenshū: Kōnan, Kōsai*. Although I did not use these books in preparing this table, they were of great help in the preparation of Chapters Five and Six.

Table 1. Data about Mazu's disciples

| Name | Dates | Place of birth | Monastery Location | Biography |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 | 749–814 | Fujian | Jiangxi | CDL 6, SGSZ 10, ZTJ 14, QTW 446 |
| Baizhang Weizheng 百丈惟政 | d. 819 | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 6, ZTJ 14 |
| Chaoan 超岸 | d.u. | Jiangsu | unknown | SGSZ 11* |
| Damei Fachang 大梅法常 | 752–839 | Hubei | Zhejiang | CDL 7, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 15 |
| Danxia Tianran 丹霞天然 | 739–824 | unknown | Henan | CDL 14, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 4 |
| Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 | d.u. | Fujian | Zhejiang | CDL 6, ZTJ 14 |
| Deng Yingfeng 鄧隱峰 | d.u. | Fujian | Hunan, Shanxi | CDL 8, SGSZ 21 |
| Dongsi Ruhui 東寺如會 | 744–823 | Guangdong | Hunan | CDL 7, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 15 |
| Ehu Dayi 鵝湖大義 | 746–818 | Zhejiang | Jiangxi, Changan | CDL 7, ZTJ 15, QTW 715 |
| Ezhou Wudeng 鄂州無等 | 749–830 | Henan | Hubei | CDL 7, SGSZ 11 |
| Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 | 760–821 | Shaanxi | Shanxi | CDL 8, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 15 |
| Foguang Ruman 佛光如滿 | 752–842? | unknown | Hunan, Loyang | CDL 6, QTW 677 |
| Funiu Zizai 伏牛自在 | 741–821 | Zhejiang | Henan (Loyang) | CDL 7, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 15 |
| Furong Taiyu 芙蓉太毓 | 747–826 | Jiangsu | Jiangsu | CDL 7, SGSZ 11 |
| Ganquan Zhixian 甘泉志賢 | d.u. | Fujian | Shanxi | SGSZ 9, CDL 6* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guiyang Wuliao<br>龜洋無了 | d.u. | Fujian | Fujian | CDL 8, ZTJ 15 |
| Guizong Zhichang<br>歸宗智常 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 7, SGSZ 17, ZTJ 15 |
| Hangzhou Zhizang<br>杭州智藏 | 741–819 | Jiangxi | Zhejiang | CDL 6*, SGSZ 6 |
| Hongzhou Shuilao<br>洪州水老 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 8 |
| Huayan Zhizang<br>華嚴智藏 | d. 815? | Zhejiang | Changan | SGSZ 11 |
| Letan Changxing<br>泐潭常興 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 7 |
| Letan Fahui<br>泐潭法會 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 6 |
| Lühou Ningbi<br>呂后寧賁 | 754–828 | Anhui | Zhejiang | CDL 8*, SGSZ 29 |
| Lushan Fazang<br>廬山法藏 | 745?–826? | Jiangxi | Jiangxi | CDL 8*, SGSZ 20 |
| Magu Baoche<br>麻谷寶徹 | d.u. | unknown | Shanxi | CDL 7, ZTJ 15 |
| Nanquan Puyuan<br>南泉普願 | 748–834 | Henan | Anhui | CDL 8, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 16 |
| Nanyuan Daoming<br>南源 道明 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 6, ZTJ 14 |
| Pang Yun<br>龐蘊 | d. 808 | Hunan? | none | CDL 8, ZTJ 15 |
| Qiling Zhitong<br>棲靈智通 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxu | CDL 6* |
| Shanshan Zhijian<br>杉山智堅 | d.u. | unknown | Anhui | CDL 6, ZTJ 14 |
| Shigong Huizang<br>石鞏慧藏 | d.u. | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 6, ZTJ 14 |
| Tianhuang Daowu<br>天皇道悟 | 748–807 | Zhejiang | Hubei | CDL 14, SGSZ 10, ZTJ 4, QTW 691, 713 |
| Tianmu Mingjue<br>天目明覺 | d. 831? | Fujian | Zhejiang | SGSZ 11 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wuxie Lingmo<br>五洩靈默 | 747–818 | Jiangxu | Zhejiang | CDL 7, SGSZ 10, ZTJ 15 |
| Xingshan Weikuan<br>興善惟寬 | 755–817 | Zhejiang | Changan | CDL 7, SGSZ 10, QTW 678 |
| Xitang Zhizang<br>西堂智藏 | 738–817 | Jiangxi | Jiangxi | CDL 7, SGSZ 10*, ZTJ 15 |
| Xiyuan Tanzang<br>西園曇藏 | 758–827 | unknown | Hunan | CDL 8, SGSZ 11 |
| Yanguan Jian<br>鹽官齊安 | 752?–841 | Zhejiang | Zhejiang | CDL 7, SGSZ 11, ZTJ 15, QTW 733 |
| Yangqi Zhenshu<br>陽岐甄叔 | d. 820 | unknown | Jiangxi | CDL 8, SGSZ 10, QTW 919 |
| Yaoshan Weiyan<br>藥山惟儼 | 745–828 | Shanxi | Hunan | CDL 14, SGSZ 17, ZTJ 4, QTW 536 |
| Zhangjing Huaihui<br>章敬 懷暉 | 755–816 | Fujian | Changan (Shaanxi) | CDL 7, ZTJ 14, SGSZ 10, QTW 501 |
| Zhaodi Huilang<br>招提慧朗 | 738–820 | Guangdong | Guangdong, Hunan | CDL 14, ZTJ 4 |
| Ziyu Daotong<br>紫玉道通 | 731–813 | Anhui | Henan | CDL 6, SGSZ 10, ZTJ 14 |

## *Glossary*

Anguo Lingzhuo 安國靈著 (691–746)
Anhui 安徽
An Lushan 安祿山 (d. 757)

Baizhang Fazheng 百丈法正 (d. 819)
*Baizhang guanglu* 百丈廣錄
Baizhang Huaihai 百丈懷海 (749–814)
Baizhang Niepan 百丈涅槃(d. 828?)
Bao Fang 鮑防 (723–790)
Bao Ji 包佶 (d.u.)
*Baizhang qinggui* 百丈清規
*Baizhang yulu* 百丈語錄
*Baizhangshan heshang yaojue* 百丈山和尚要決
Baizhang Weizheng 百丈惟政 (d.u.)
Baofeng monastery 寶峰寺
*Baolin zhuan* 寶林傳
Bao Rong 包融 (d.u.)
Baotang 保唐
Baozhi 寶誌 (418–514)
Baxi 巴西
beiming 碑銘
*Beishan lu* 北山錄
benjue 本覺
Biansong 汴宋
*Biyan lu* 碧巖錄
Bo Juyi 白居易 (772–846)
Bukong 不空 (705–774)
buliaoyi jiao 不了義教
bushi wu 不是物

Caodong School 曹洞宗
Caoshan Benji 曹山本寂(840–901)
Caoxi 曹溪
Chan 禪
Changan 長安
changdaoshi 唱導師
Changlu Zongzc 長蘆宗賾 (d.u.)
Changsha 長沙
*Chanmen guishi* 禪門規式
chanshi 禪師
*Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規
*Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu* 禪源諸詮集都序
chanzong 禪宗
Chaoan 超岸(d.u.)
cheng 誠
Chengdu 成都
Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839)
Chinul 智訥 (1158–1210)
chuandeng lu 傳燈錄
*Chuan fabao ji* 傳法寶紀
Chuanfa temple 傳法院
*Chuanxin fayao* 傳心法要
Chuji 處寂 (d. 734?)
chujia 出家
Cui Qun 崔群 (772–832)

Dabei 大悲 (709–816)
Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163)
Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779)
Daji chanshi 大寂禪師
Damei Fachang 大梅法常 (752–839)
*Da niepan jing* 大涅槃經
Danran 坦然(d.u.)
Danxia Tianran 丹霞天然 (739–824)
Danyang 丹陽
Daoan 道安 (312–385)

Daoxin 道信 (580–651)
Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667)
Dayu 大愚 (d.u.)
Daojun 道峻 (d.u.)
Daoyuan 道原 (d.u.)
Daoyuan 道圓 (d.u.)
Da Zhuangyan pagoda 大莊嚴塔
Dazhu Huihai 大珠慧海 (fl. 8th c.)
Deng Yinfeng 鄧隱峰 (d.u.)
Deshan Xuanjian 德山宣鑑 (782–865)
Dezong 德宗 (r. 779–805)
ding 定
Dongshan famen 東山法門
Dongshan Lianjie 洞山良介 (807–869)
Dongsi Ruhui 東寺如會 (744–823)
Dufu 杜甫 (712–770)
dun 頓
Dunhuang 敦煌
dunwu 頓悟
dunwu benxing 頓悟本性
dunwu dunxiu 頓悟頓修
dunwu jianxiu 頓悟漸修
*Dunwu rudao yaomen lun* 頓悟入道要門論
dunxiu 頓修
Dushun 杜順 (557–640)

Ehu Dayi 鵝湖大義 (746–818)
Enchin 圓珍 (814–891)
Ennin 圓仁 (799–852)
Ezhou Wudeng 鄂州無等 (749–830)

*Fahua jing* 法華經
fangbian 方便
Farong 法融 (594–657)
Faru 法如 (638–689)
Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885–958)
Fayan School 法眼宗
Fazang 法藏 (643–712)
Faxiang 法相
feixin feifo 非心非佛
Fenzhou Wuye 汾州無業 (760–821)
Foguang Ruman 佛光如滿 (752–842?)
Fojiyan 佛跡巖
fozu 佛祖
Fu dashi 傅大士
Fujian 福建
Funiu Zizai 伏牛自在 (741–821)
Furong Taiyu 芙蓉太毓 (747–826)
Fuyan chansi 福嚴禪寺
Fuzhou 撫州

Ganquan Zhixian 甘泉志賢 (d.u.)
*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳
gongan 公案
Gonggong mountain 龔公山
Guanding 灌頂 (561–632)
Guangdong 廣東
Guanyin 觀音
Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780–841)
Guishan Lingyou 溈山靈祐 (771–853)
*Guishan jingce* 溈山警策
Guiyang School 溈仰宗
Guiyang Wuliao 龜洋無了 (d.u.)
Guizong Zhichang 歸宗知常 (d.u.)
Guoqing monastery 國清寺
guwen 古文
*Gu zunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄

Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824)
Hangzhou 杭州
Hangzhou Zhizang 杭州智藏 (741–819)
Hanshan 寒山
Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623)
Hanzhou 漢州
Hengyue 衡嶽
Heze Shenhui 荷澤神會 (684–758)
Honch'ŏk 洪陟 (d.u.)
Hongjing 弘景 (634–712)
Hongren 弘忍 (601–674)

Hongzhou 洪州
Hongzhou School 洪州宗
Hongzhou Shuilao 洪州水老(d.u.)
*Hou Han shu* 後漢書
Hu Shi 胡適
Huangbo Xiyun 黃檗希運 (d. 850?)
Huang Chao 黃巢 (d. 884)
Huangfu Bo 黃甫鎛 (c. 755–820)
Huanglong Weizhong 黃龍惟忠 (705–782)
Huangmei mountain 黃梅山
Huayan (School) 華嚴
*Huayan Scripture* 華嚴經
hui 惠
Huichang (era) 會昌
Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554)
Huike 慧可 (487–593)
Huineng 慧能 (638–713)
Huisi 慧思 (515–577)
Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416)
Huizhen 惠眞 (673–751)
Hyakujō ko shingi 百丈古清規
Hyech'ŏl 慧哲 (785–861)
Hyŏnuk 玄昱(787–868)

Ji Ying 齊映 (748–795)
jian 漸
jiaochan yizhi 教禪一致
jiaowai biechuan 教外別傳
Jianchang 建昌
Jingan county 靖安縣
Jiangnan 劍南
jiangshi 講師
Jianke 劍客
Jianyang 建陽
Jianzhong (era) 建中 (780–783)
*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄
Jingjue 淨覺 (683–750?)
Jingnan 荊南
Jingshan Faqin 徑山法欽 (714–792)
jingtu 淨土
jing yun 經云
Jingzhong 淨衆
Jingzhou 荊州
jinshi 進士
*Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書
jixin jifo 即心即佛
jixin shi fo 即心是佛
Jizang 吉藏 (549–623)

Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺
kanhua 看話
Kim heshang 金和尙 (684–762)

Laoan 老安(584?–708)
Laozi 老子
*Lengqie jing* 楞伽經
*Lengqie shizi ji* 楞伽師資記
Letan Changxing 泐潭常興(d.u.)
Letan Fahui 泐潭法會 (d.u.)
Letan monastery 泐潭寺
Li Ao 李翺 (772–841)
Li Bo 李渤(773–831)
Li Hua 李華 (c. 715–774)
Li Jian 李兼 (d.u.)
Li Shangyin 李商隱 (812-858)
Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730)
liangshui fa 兩稅法
Liang (dynasty) 梁 (502–557)
liaoyi jiao 了義教
*Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記
liezhuan 列傳
Lingmo 靈默
Lingnan 嶺南
Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866)
*Linji yulu* 臨濟語錄
Linchuan 臨川
liaoyi jiao 了義教
*Liuzu tanjing* 六祖壇經
Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元(773–819)

Lohan Guichen 羅漢桂琛(867–928)
Lu Gong 魯恭
Lu Jianqiu 盧簡求 (789-846)
Lu Sigong 路嗣恭(711–781)
Lü Wen 呂溫 (772–811)
Lühou Ningbi 呂后寧賁(754–828)
lun 論
*Lunyu* 論語
Luoyang 洛陽
Lushan 廬山
Lushan Fazang 廬山法藏(744?–825?)

Magu Baoche 麻谷寶徹(d.u.)
Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788)
*Mazu yulu* 馬祖語錄
*Mengzi* 孟子
ming 明
Mingyue mountain 明月山
Moheyan 摩訶衍
Muyŏm 無染 (799–888)
Muzong 穆宗 (r. 820–824)

Nanchang 南昌
Nankang-jun 南康郡
Nanquan Puyuan 南泉普願 (748–834)
Nanyuan Daoming 南源 道明(d.u.)
Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775)
Nanyue (mountain) 南嶽
Nanyue Chengyuan 南嶽承遠 (712–802)
Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677–744)
nianfo 念佛
Niutou Farong 牛頭法融 (594–657)
Niutou Huizhong 牛頭慧忠 (683–769)
Niutou mountain 牛頭山

Pang, Layman 龐居士 (d. 808?)
Pang Yun 龐蘊 (d. 808?)
panjiao 判教
Pei Du 裴度(765–839)
Pei Kuan 裴寬 (681–755)
Pei Xiu 裴休 (787?–860)
*Pei Xiu sheyiwen* 裴休拾遺文
Pei Xu 裴諝 (719–793)
Pei Zhou 裴胄 (729–803)
pingchang xin shi dao 平常心是道
Pŏmil 梵日(810–889)
Puji 普寂 (651–739)
puqing 普請
puqing zuowu 普請作務

Qian 虔
Qiling Zhitong 棲靈智通(d.u.)
qinggui 清規
Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (d. 740)
Quan Deyu 權德輿 (759–818)

rulaizang 如來藏

Sanjie jiao 三階教
sanju 三句
Sanlun 三論
Sengcan 僧璨 (d. 606?)
Sengzhao 僧肇 (374?–414)
Shandao 善導 (613–681)
shangtang 上堂
Shannan-dao 山南道
Shanshan Zhijian 杉山智堅(d.u.)
Shaotan 紹曇
Shenqing 神清(d. 806–820)
Shenxiu 神秀 (606?–706)
Shide 拾得
Shigong Huizang 石鞏慧藏 (d.u.)
*Shiji* 史記
shilang 侍郎
Shimen mountain 石門山
Shitou Xiqian 石頭希遷 (700–790)
shihzhong yun 示衆云
*Shoulengyan jing* 首楞嚴經

Shunzong 順宗 (r. 805)
si 嗣
Sichuan 四川
*Sijia yulu* 四家語錄
Silla (Unified) 新羅 (669–936)
Sima Qian 司馬遷
Song 宋 (960–1279)
*Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳
Song mountain 嵩山
Sui 隋 (581–618)
sushi 素食

Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649)
Tang 唐 (618–907)
Tang heshang 唐和尙 (d. 734)
*Tanyu* 壇語
Tianbao 天寶
Tianhuang Daowu 天皇道悟 (748–807)
Tianmu Mingjue 天目明覺 (d. 831?)
*Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄
Tiantai mountain 天台山
titou shi 剃頭師
Toŭi 道義 (d. 825)
Toyun 道允 (797–868)
tupi 荼毘

*Wanling lu* 宛陵錄
Wei Chuhou 韋處厚 (773–823)
Weijing 惟頸 (d.u.)
Wei Xian 韋銑 (d.u.)
wenda 問答
*Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華
*Wujia zhengzong zan* 五家正宗贊
*Wumen guan* 無門關
Wumen Huikai 無門慧開 (1183–1260)
wunian 無念
Wushan Zhizang 烏山智藏 (741–819)
wusheng 無生
Wuxiang 無相 (684–762)
*Wuxi ji* 武溪集
wuxin 無心
wuxiangjie 無相戒
Wuxie Lingmo 五洩靈默 (747–818)
wuyi 無意
wuyi 無憶
Wuzhu 無住 (714–774)
Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840–846)

Xiangyan Zhixian 香嚴智閑 (d.u.)
Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 805–820)
xichan 習禪
Xili mountain 西裏山
xingfu 興福
xinglu 行錄
Xingshan Weikuan 興善惟寬 (755–817)
*Xin Tangshu* 新唐書
Xitang Zhizang 西堂智藏 (735–814)
*Xiuxin yaolun* 修心要論
Xiyuan Tanzang 西園曇藏 (d.u.)
*Xu baolin zhuan* 續寶林傳
*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳
Xuanshan Shibei 玄沙師備 (835–908)
Xuansu 玄素 (668–752)
Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664)
Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756)
Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 846–859)
Xuefeng Yicun 雪峰義存 (822–908)
Xuedou Zhongxian 雪竇重顯 (980–1052)

Yan Hui 顏回
Yang Jie 楊傑 (d.u.)
Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020)
Yangshan Huiji 仰山慧寂 (807–833)
Yanguan Jian 鹽官齊安 (752–841)
Yangqi Zhenshu 陽岐甄叔 (d. 820)
Yaoshan Weiyan 藥山惟儼 (745–828)
yixin chuanxin 以心傳心
Yizong 懿宗 (r. 859–873)
yong 用

Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904–975)
Yuan (dynasty) 元 (1280–1368)
Yuan Zai 元載 (d. 777)
*Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經
*Yuanjuejing dashuchao* 圓覺經大疏鈔
Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063–1135)
*Yuanwu xinyao* 圓悟心要
yuben 語本
*Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝
yulu 語錄
*Yunmen guanglu* 雲門廣錄
Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃 (864–949)
Yuquan monastery 玉泉寺
yuyan 豫言
Yuzhang-wang 豫章王 (r. 551–552)
Yuzhou 渝州

Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001)
Zhangjing Huaihui 章敬懷暉 (756–815)
Zhangle Farong 長樂法融 (747–835)
Zhangqiu Jianqiong 章仇兼瓊 (d.u.)
Zhangsong Ma 長松馬 (d.u.)
Zhang Zhengfu 張正甫 (d.u.)
Zhanran 湛然 (711–782)
Zhaodi Huilang 招提慧朗 (738–820)
Zhaozhou Zongshen 趙州從諗 (778–897)
Zhen Xu 陣詡 (d.u.)
zhenxin 眞心
Zhishen 智詵 (609–702)
zhishi 知事
Zhiwei 智威 (d.u.)
Zhiyan 智儼 (602–668)
Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597)
Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 705–710)
Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)
Zhuangzi 莊子
zhuoyu 著語
Ziyu Daotong 紫玉道通 (731–813)
Zizhong 資中
zong 宗
zongchimen 總持門
*Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄
*Zongmen shigui lun* 宗門十規論
zuochan 坐禪
*Zutang ji* 祖堂集

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